THE COMMUNIST

Vol. XI December, 1932 No. 12

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FROM THE CONTENTS

The United Front Policy and the Struggle Against Sectarianism . . . . (*Editorial*)

The Scottsboro Decision . *Harry Haywood*

The Expanding Inter-Imperialist Wars In South America . . . *William Simons*

The United Front — A Tactic of Struggle, Not Peace . . . . . *John Williamson*

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THE COMMUNIST

A Magazine of the Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism

Published Monthly by the

Communist Party of the United States of America

Entered as second class matter November 2, 1927, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

VOL. XI DECEMBER, 1932 No. 12

CONTENTS

THE UNITED FRONT POLICY AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SECTARIANISM 1059

EDITORIAL

THE SCOTTSBORO DECISION 1065

By HARRY HAYWOOD

THE EXPANDING INTER-IMPERIALIST WARS IN SOUTH AMERICA 1076

By WILLIAM SIMONS

THE UNITED FRONT—A TACTIC OF STRUGGLE, NOT PEACE 1086

By JOHN WILLIAMSON

DISTORTERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY HERITAGE OF THE AMERICAN PROLETARIAT 1103

By JAMES S. ALLEN

SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS 1119

By S. CARPIO

HOW MANY UNEMPLOYED? (*continued from last month's issue*) 1135

By JOHN IRVING

BOOK REVIEWS: 1143

INDEX—VOLUME XI—1932 1149

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The United Front Policy And the Fight Against Sectarianism

THE experiences and lessons of the struggles in Chicago against the 50 percent cut in relief bring forward clearly the main features of the problems of the united front from below.

In Chicago we had the appearance, in the past year, of two other organizations growing up besides the Unemployed Councils. We have discussed several times in the past the political aspect of this, how it reflects the weakness of our unemployed organizations and activities, etc. What are the lessons to be learned from the application of the united front tactics in the Chicago unemployed struggles? A brief discussion of the background and the development of the events leading up to the struggle against the cut in relief is necessary in order to establish the main lessons from the application of the united front from below.

The comrades in Chicago immediately after the issuance of the Foster speech began to develop the agitation on the basis of this speech among the rank and file followers of these rival organizations among the Chicago unemployed. At first the Chicago comrades did not have definitely in mind any concrete public steps toward calling a conference with these people. This was done only when we received information that the influence of our agitation had penetrated so deeply into Borders' committee, the so-called Workers' Committee on Unemployment, that Borders himself was preparing to issue a call for a united front conference of some sort. Our comrades realized the danger of allowing the initiative to slip into the hands of Borders on this issue. Without delay they immediately issued the call, openly to the workers generally and to the members of the Workers' Committee on Unemployment. They also distributed a large number of leaflets with this open letter. The result of this leaflet was tremendous and resulted in immediately forcing an approach to us by not only Borders' committee, but similar organizations like the Workers' League.

At the very first meeting Borders attempted to split the conference,

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clearly going there only by the force of the mass pressure of the members of his organization. He attempted to split this conference on the issue of whether the Communist Party should be allowed to carry its banners in the demonstrations. After a brief discussion on the problems to be faced in this conference, the comrades worked out a set of demands and the immediate tactics of the struggle, including immediate demonstrations before the relief bureaus and the organization of a city-wide march into the Loop and decided to put these as the only problems of the conference and to rule out all other questions. If Borders and his associates were to split, we should force them to split on these issues and not on the question of banners of the Communist Party. This action was very successful. At the first meeting Borders had the majority, and he consolidated not only the delegates of his own organization, but the delegates of the Workers' League which is a split-off from the Proletarian Party. But at the second meeting already our proposals won the support of the delegates from the Workers' League and from a number of Borders' own delegation. Borders was isolated and forced to go in with our proposals, to accept every proposal that we made with only the slight modification of one demand. Included in the program of action was the passing of all joint actions by a rank and file conference with the election of delegates of each branch of each participating organization to the conference.

Borders fought against the demonstrations around the relief stations, accepting, however, the city-wide march into the Loop. It should be emphasized that the response to our work was not out of thin air. It was the struggle against the fifty percent cut in relief that had been put into effect on the first of October without notice.

The acceptance of our proposals was immediately followed by the carrying through of the program and organization of demonstrations before the relief councils to which Borders was opposed, the involving of members of his organizations in these actions, the gathering of a joint delegate conference to make final decision on the mass action and the demands for it. The conference was a very successful mass conference. Over 350 organizations sent delegates, over 700 delegates came altogether, not only the delegates of our Unemployed Councils, Borders' committees and the Workers' League, but also delegates from unions, 10 local unions of the A. F. of L., International Workers Order, a few Workmen's Circle branches, one or two locals of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Amalgamated Food Workers local, the Khaki Shirts, and there were some other organizations of veterans and language organizations.

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What was the danger that confronted us in the united front conference and in the policies pursued by us.

The conference was not mechanically controlled by us. We probably had direct organizational contact with no more than a third of the delegates. Any major errors of policy on our part in that conference would have resulted very disastrously for us. We were facing two dangers—the danger on the one hand of the splitting of the conference in such a way as to throw the major part of this organization into the hands of Borders (the danger of a sectarian line), and on the other hand, the danger of a bloc with these people from the top and political capitulation to them in the conference. We successfully avoided both these dangers. We conducted a sharp struggle against the Borders leadership and had a head-on collision with Borders and an open fight with him before the conference for the control of the conference. The keynote of this fight was expressed by the spokesman of the Party there, by Comrade Williamson, and at the same time we conducted the fight on such issues as to win the support of the overwhelming majority.

There were over 700 delegates present but the total vote was only about 500, in which we had a mapority of 72. It was sufficient to carry the masses into the struggle.

What were some of the manifestations of the right danger that came to the surface in the application of the united front policy in Chicago?

In the development of this struggle, in this conference, there came forward very sharply expressions of the right danger inside our movement. Comrade Verblin at the fraction made a sharp speech against Comrade Williamson's remarks at the conference and he developed a theory about how we should carry through the united front. First, he describes his own rôle there, (quoting from the stenograms his own words). He says: "I tried to please everybody." This is important as indicating this whole conception of what is a united front, a place where everyone comes together and the rôle of the leaders is to please everybody.

In his criticism of Comrade Williamson's speech he formulated what should be our aim in the united front with relation to the social fascists in the following words: "Our aim is not so much that we expose the leadership but that the leadership exposes itself." This is a classical formulation of the right wing theory of the united front. Complete passivity on our part and a trusting in the demagogy and self-exposure of the social fascists and the demagogues, and the workers coming to us without an active struggle through the united

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front to expose and defeat the social fascists. His whole speech is an elaboration of this theory.

This struggle around the Chicago unemployed united front action gives us an opportunity to give a lead on this question to the entire Party in every locality. Undoubtedly this is an illustration of the main danger in the development of our work. At the same time we must recognize that it is most sharply in Chicago that this main danger has come forth. We don't hear about it so much anywhere else. Why? Because in almost every other locality the movement is so paralyzed by sectarian tendencies that they cannot arrive at the level of struggle to face such problems. In Chicago sectarian tendencies have also been expressed. The bearer of the sectarian tendency insofar as it has expressed itself in the leadership in Chicago is Comrade M. He has been sharply critical of every effort toward the united front, he is fearful that if we will come into the same room with Borders we will loose our Communist purity, that Borders will take advantage of it, and that we will lose. Especially he has been against all these joint conferences. At first he was against all joint conferences, and when joint conferences were successfully held, he said it would have been all right if we had rank and file comrades and excluded the leaders. He wants the conclusion of the fight as a precondition to the beginning of the struggle.

The difference between Chicago and other places is that in Chicago the tendency of Comrade M. is a small minority in the leadership, and in most other places it is dominant in all of our work. In New York City we have had for some time a growing development of unemployed councils led by the Socialists. This has been a problem of long standing in the district, and our attitude has been a sectarian one—to consider these workers as being entirely social fascists, and that we have to smash them.

Now we have another document in the center that raises in another form the inner obstacles to the mobilization of all of our forces for the hunger march and our unemployed struggles: a communication from Comrade X, proposing the postponement of the Hunger March, with a long series of arguments in support of this and coming to the conclusion that the March will surely not be successful, the difficulties are too great, we should transform it into a small delegation and postpone the March until sometime next spring—probably to greet the inauguration of the new president.

This perhaps may be a personal opinion of Comrade X. He says: "This is my personal opinion. I have not taken it up in a leading body . . . " We can accept that at its face value, but the fact remains that the comrade most responsible for the work in a certain

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place, has such opinions, must be taken very seriously. What are the arguments the comrade raises?

First, he argues that the result of the elections and the landslide of the Democratic Party shows many workers still think that things may be different when Roosevelt becomes president, and that these illusions can only be exposed through concrete deeds, and we must remember that the Democratic Party inserted in its platform the demand for unemployment insurance. This argument is supposed to mean that the march is not effective until the Democratic president is there. This argument is an exaggerated form of parliamentary illusions. To the extent that these illusions exist among the masses, and they do exist, they only sharpen the necessity for action on our part at the opening of Congress on December 5th to raise the issue of unemployment relief and insurance in the most forceful possible way, and is by no means an argument for relinquishing our efforts in this respect.

The second argument that he brings forward is that many workers have expressed the following idea—it is no use going to Washington now. We still have the same lame-duck Congress, and we should wait until Roosevelt becomes president and is in power. This is the same argument in a different form. It ignores the fact that insofar as the results of the elections have any bearing on the practicability of the demands for unemployment insurance, they are to increase the possibilities of actually securing these demands by a determined mass action in support of them. Further, it leaves the problem of winter relief entirely out of the picture.

And the third argument is that the preparations for the march have not been sufficient, no sufficient local struggles, that the election campaign was not connected up with the preparations, that only three weeks before the March itself are preparations being seriously taken up, that a serious mobilization did not even start and that even though the composition of the marchers might be better than last year because of the building up of certain local organizations of the unemployed, still the organized mass support will be much narrower than last year, in spite of the much more favorable objective possibilities. Such arguments as these are merely a rationalization and shrinking away from the tasks involved. It is merely the frantic searching for excuses for abandoning the action because of the practical difficulties of it. Certainly the arguments will not bear an analysis at all.

We must not ignore the difficulties that concerned us in the preparations for the National Hunger March, but to offset this we have now a number of more favorable objective conditions as compared

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with the situation that prevailed on the eve of the first National Hunger March.

In the first place, last year's successful march was conducted in an economic situation which in terms of economic index figures was 25 points higher than this year. The crisis is now 33 percent deeper, the pressure of hunger has been multiplied at least ten times, the resources of the workers have been practically entirely exhausted, and where last year's march was conducted under the *threat* of hunger for millions, this year's march is conducted on the basis of the *actual starvation of millions*. So much for the objective conditions under which we are working which call for such an action with ten times more force than last year.

As to the subjective factors. We have favorable ones for the success of this year's march, first of all, in the knowledge that it is possible to carry through such a march. We had one, it is proven. Last year it could be argued against, that it is impossible, that it is extremely difficult. This year such arguments fall to the ground because it has been proven in life—the possibility of it, and also the tremendous political effectiveness of it.

We have the further condition more favorable than last year, that whereas the March last year was undertaken at the conclusion of a summer in which the unemployed movement had disintegrated, a summer in which there had been no important unemployed struggles, on the contrary, this year the march is taking place on the crest of a rising wave of struggle of the unemployed, (in spite of the unsatisfactory condition of these struggles in which we can only point to three outstanding achievements—Chicago, St. Louis and Birmingham). There are struggles everywhere and have been all through the summer, and continuing and increasing down to today.

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The Scottsboro Decision

VICTORY OF REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE OVER REFORMIST BETRAYAL

By HARRY HAYWOOD

THE recent action of the United States Supreme Court in reversing the decision of the Scottsboro Circuit Court and the Alabama Supreme Court in the Scottsboro case, is a victory of far-reaching significance in the struggles of the Negro masses for liberation and the revolutionary labor movement in general. The powerful mass protest, embracing millions of workers throughout the world at the initiative of the Communist Party and the International Labor Defense, has again stayed the hands of the Alabama lynchers in carrying through their sinister designs to murder the innocent Negro boys. The decision of the Supreme Court is further proof and vindication of the correctness of the revolutionary policy of the Communist Party.

At the same time, the decision of the Supreme Court was calculated to revive the confidence of the masses in the bourgeois-democratic institutions. The democratic illusions of the masses, already shaken by the crisis and the boss offensive, have been further undermined by the movement of mass action and political exposure carried through by the Communist Party and International Labor Defense around the case of the Scottsboro boys. The New York *Times,* reactionary organ of finance capital, emphasizes just this fact. The decision, it states, is not—

> "due to the outcry in Washington and in other cities, as well as in Moscow and by European Communists, asserting that a spirit of wicked class prejudice pervades the United States, and that here no justice can be had for the poor and ignorant . . . That great tribunal (the United States Supreme Court) appears once more as mindful of human rights. It is not often that we see the issue of justice to the lowliest and possibly the most unworthy, so clearly appearing in an important judicial decision. *It ought to abate the rancor of extreme radicals, while confirming the faith of the American people in the soundness of their institutions and especially in the integrity of their courts.*"

To "abate" the anger of the masses, to confirm their faith in the "soundness" of bourgeois institutions "especially in the integrity of

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the courts"—this then was the avowed object of the decision. Thus, in the same breath while denying the rôle of the mass movement and attacking the Communist Party, the capitalists are nevertheless forced to admit that in making their decision the motive of the honorable gentlemen of the Supreme Court was to allay the mass movement. Thus the strategy of the imperialists is clear, heralding the decision as a vindication of "justice" to confuse and disarm the vigilance of the masses, and in this manner to lay the ground for a new attack.

Only in the light of the mass movement can the decision of the United States Supreme Court be understood.

Let us look at the decision. Even a cursory examination of this lengthy document despite the befogging terminology in which it is couched, shows that in it the fundamental political questions involved in the case are contemptuously brushed aside and that the decision is based entirely upon legal technicalities.

> "The only one of the assignments which we shall consider is the second, in respect of the denial of counsel: *and it becomes unnecessary to discuss the facts of the case or the circumstances surrounding the prosecution* except insofar as they reflect light upon that question."

Thus the frame-up character of the case, the savage lynch atmosphere surrounding and dominating the trial, the barring of Negroes from the jury—all of these fundamental questions raised by the defense, which bespeak the barbarous national oppression of the Negro people, the flagrant denial of even the most elementary rights, were brazenly ignored in the Supreme Court decision.

Under cover of upholding "democracy," "constitutional rights," the Supreme Court endorses the violation of democratic rights for the Negro masses as reflected in Scottsboro.

But this is not all. The Supreme Court gives the cue to the Alabama lynchers on how such matters should be handled in this period of the political awakening of the toilers. It tells the Alabama lynchers that it has no objection to the legal murder of these innocent boys, provided it is carried through with the due observance of bourgeois legal forms. Felix Frankfurther, the "great liberal," in the New York *Times* of November 13, frankly admits that—

> "It (the Supreme Court decision) leaves that fate (the murder of the boys) ultimately untouched. Upon the question of guilt or innocence it bears not even remotely. That question remains to be determined in normal course by the constituted tribunals of Alabama. *The Supreme Court has declared only that the determination must be made with due observance of the decencies of civilized procedure.*"

The Alabama slave-drivers lose no time in picking up the cue,

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Through their mouthpiece, the *Birmingham Post,* they hasten to give assurance that—

> "Every precaution should be taken so that no room is left for criticism and twisting of fact when the second trials have been completed and the verdict is pronounced."

The decision of the Supreme Court reflects once again the solid united front of Wall Street finance capital with the Southern slave-drivers to maintain the national oppression of the Negro people.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SCOTTSBORO CASE

Scottsboro is but a single expression of the whole system of national oppression of the Negro people—a system which in this country of "enlightened" capitalist democracy holds in shameless suppression a nation of 14,000,000 human beings, subjects them to super-exploitation on the plantations and in the factories, through a system of segregation and Jim-Crowism, denies them even the most elementary political rights and relegates them to a position of social pariahs.

The Scottsboro frame-up, taking place in the midst of the crisis and deepening revolutionary ferment of the masses, dramatizes in all its harshness the brutal character of the imperialist offensive as directed particularly against the Negro masses. Scottsboro raised in the most acute manner fundamental questions affecting the lives of the Negro masses: lynching, peonage, Jim-Crowism, denial of human rights—the whole system of national oppression, which, as a result of the crisis, has undergone an all-round worsening.

Scottsboro also revealed the growing movement among the Negro toilers in the factories and on the plantations, the forerunners of the gathering struggles for Negro liberation, for land and freedom. Scottsboro revealed how the ruling class hopes to maintain this system under conditions of deepening crisis, growing struggle and unity of Negro and white toilers. This policy of the white ruling class received its most open and brutal expression in the statement of Governor Ross Sterling of Texas. In refusing the stay of execution in the case of a framed-up young Negro, this arrogant spokesman of the slave-drivers stated:

> *"It may be that this boy is innocent. But it is sometimes necessary to burn a house in order to save a village."*

Obviously, the "village" which Governor Sterling and those whom he represents seek to save, is the system of national oppression of the Negro people threatened by the rising revolt of the Negro toilers against landlord-capitalist slavery, which was so clearly symbolized in the case of the young Negro farmhand. This shows that mob violence and legal lynchings are all part of the capitalist methods of sup-

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pression in the attempt to intimidate and terrorize the Negro masses and to split the growing unity of the Negro and white toilers.

The Communist Party proceeded from the basic understanding of the Scottsboro case as a part of the national oppression of the Negro masses—not merely a case of nine boys but a case of nine *Negro* boys, persecuted as members of an oppressed people. Hence, the struggle for the complete freedom of the Scottsboro boys could be effective only if linked up with the struggle against the whole system which breeds similar Scottsboros, and by involving in this struggle the broadest masses of Negro and white toilers. To make Scottsboro a decisive battle on the whole front of Negro liberation—such was the aim of the Party.

The tactics of the Communist Party were: no reliance on the capitalist courts, the instruments of national and class oppression; on the contrary it carried on the sharpest fight against all democratic and legalistic illusions among the masses. While utilizing all legal and parliamentary possibilities, adequate legal aid to the victims, petitions, etc., it subordinated these to the organization and development of revolutionary mass action outside of courts and bourgeois legislative bodies.

Only on the basis of such revolutionary tactics could the Communist Party develop a mass movement around Scottsboro, drawing into support of this movement all of the oppressed classes. Only through such methods, did we succeed in staying the murder of the innocent victims.

REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS VERSUS REFORMIST BETRAYALS

In the course of the development of the struggle for the Scottsboro boys, and as the movement gained momentum, there took place a crystallization of class forces. The revolutionary tactics of the Communist Party forced out in the open all enemies of the working class and the Negro people. A constellation of all the reactionary forces, extending from the white imperialists, the Ku Klux Klan to the Socialists and Negro reformist lackeys, rapidly began to take form against the movement of the masses, and its leader the Communist Party.

In this reactionary front the division of tasks is and was as follows. The imperialist bourgeoisie through its Southern section, was determined to murder the boys as a bloody warning to the Negro masses. Preparing the ground for this, it attempted to incite the wildest chauvinist passions among the masses of white people. This aim was supplemented by the Socialist and Negro bourgeois reformist agents, whose task was to confuse and disorganize the revolu-

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tionary defense movement from within, by fostering illusions as to the "fairness and impartiality" of bourgeois courts and institutions and attacking the Communist Party.

In this a most important rôle was assigned to the Negro reformists grouped around the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. At first the N.A.A.C.P. completely ignored the case. Forced finally by mass protest to take a stand on the case, it issued its first press release. The *Crisis,* organ of the N.A.A.C.P. in an attempt to explain away this treachery writes:

> "When we hear that eight colored men have raped two white girls in Alabama we are not the first in the field to defend them. *If they were guilty and had a fair trial* the case is none of our business. We did not know whether they were guilty or not. We feared an unjust trial even if they were guilty. But first we sought the facts, we must have the truth. Once we were convinced that the eight ignorant, poverty-stricken boys had been framed by a mob on the forced testimony of two prostitutes, then and not until then did we throw every ounce of energy into the Scottsboro case."

The statement that the boys were framed up by a mob is a deliberate lie. The obvious purpose of this mis-statement is to shift the responsibility for lynch verdicts from the courts and the white ruling class, onto the masses, thereby helping the Alabama slave-drivers to conceal the lynch character of their institutions. This, of course, is in keeping with the main task of these Negro misleaders, to bolster up the illusions of the masses in the institutions of the ruling class lynchers. This is also witnessed in the statement "we feared an unjust trial" which infers that it is possible for the boys to receive "impartial justice" at the hands of the lynchers themselves.

After this it is clear that the only factor that really "convinced" the N.A.A.C.P. was the rising movement of Negro and white toilers against the vicious frame-up which seriously threatened its leadership over the Negro masses. It was precisely this movement that "convinced" the N.A.A.C.P. "to throw every ounce of energy into the Scottsboro case," however, *not* against the lynchers of the Negro people, but against those forces organizing and leading the mass movement for the defense of the boys—the Communist Party and the International Labor Defense.

Thus, on May 8, claiming that there "were strong grounds for believing the boys innocent," the N.A.A.C.P. is alarmed by the fact "that the Communist sympathizers actually sent telegrams to the Sheriff and Governor demanding the immediate unconditional release of the boys, a thing which neither was empowered to do." Again, on May 11, the N.A.A.C.P. characterized the demand for the immediate unconditional release of the boys as a "manifestly absurd and

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impossible demand," adding that "The Communists, however, seem far more interested in making Communist propaganda out of this case than they are in genuinely trying to save the boys from the electric chair."

Continuing this line on May 16, the *Pittsburgh Courier,* mouthpiece of the N.A.A.C.P. which in the first days of the case called the boys "rapists," openly attacking the Communist Party, stated:

> "It is more likely, however, that if mobs break out in Alabama and these eight boys are taken from the chair and lynched, it would probably be due to the nonsensical activities of the Communists, who by their misguided energies are finally driving the citizens of Alabama to the point of desperation."

Thus the lynchers are not only completely absolved from any responsibility for the fate of the boys, but are actually justified in their lynch terror against the Negro people. It follows, according to this, that in order to save the nine boys, the main fire must be directed against the Communists and the mass protest movement under their leadership.

The Alabama Ku Klux Klan, recognized the valuable support to its lynch policy, correctly stated through its organ, the *Jackson County Sentinel*, that there was no principle difference between the N.A.A.C.P. and the Southern ruling class.

Logically developing this line, the N.A.A.C.P. misleaders joined with the lynchers in open provocation against the mass protest movement and its leader, the Communist Party. In a speech in Chattanooga, William Pickens, Field Organizer of the N.A.A.C.P., warned the Southern capitalists.

> "Let the white people of Alabama sit up and take notice: this Communist sapping through the densely ignorant portion of the colored population, while not immediately menacing to government itself, is certainly menacing to good race relations."

It is significant to note that this speech of Pickens openly inciting the lynchers to violence against the masses, was made on the eve of the battle at Camp Hill when the Alabama bourgeoisie attempted to crush the first organized expression of the developing struggle of the sharecroppers and the inauguration of a campaign of terror in the lower South which according even to the imperialist agent, Howard Kester of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, resulted in the murder of seventy-five Negroes. Undoubtedly, this speech placed an additional weapon in the hands of the white ruling class against the Negro people.

It was by these methods that the N.A.A.C.P. leaders attempted

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to disorganize the revolutionary mass movement, isolate the Communist Party and the revolutionary organizations and furnish a cloak behind which the Alabama lynchers could carry through their bloody work. In brief, their attacks were directed not against the violence and lynch terror of the capitalists, but against the resistance of the masses. Truly, in Scottsboro the N.A.A.C.P. played the rôle of assistant hangman of Negro masses.

The despicable treachery of the Negro bourgeois reformists, their cringing servility to the white ruling class as exemplified in the Scottsboro case, is not accidental, but represents the basic tendency of Negro reformism as based upon the peculiar position of the Negro bourgeoisie, and the inevitable development of this tendency under conditions of sharpening crisis and rise of Negro liberation and working class struggles.

"HOLY ALLIANCE" OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND NEGRO REFORMISTS

The Socialist Party fully supported and complemented the activities of the Negro reformists. Thus, Thomas, the chief exponent of American "Socialism" wrote in the *New Leader* of April 2, 1932:

> "The Communist tactics of exploiting labor struggles and examples of racial injustice for Party purposes probably helps to explain the action of the Alabama Supreme Court in confirming the conviction of the Scottsboro boys."

Mr. Thomas gloatingly hails the decision of the Alabama Supreme Court, upholding the lynch verdict of the lower courts as a vindication of reformist tactics of reliance on the institutions of the ruling class oppressors as against mass struggles. In this he would have the workers believe that the poor Alabama lynchers were deterred from their "noble" and "humane" efforts to give the boys a "fair" and "impartial" trial by the tactics of the Communist Party. Of course, even this act of the lynchers (so Mr. Thomas pretends) is merely an isolated case of "miscarriage of justice" and not a part of the whole system of oppression, terror and lynching of the Negro people.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Thomas is opposed to the Communist tactics of mass revolutionary struggles for the freedom of the boys on the same ground that he is opposed to the entire struggle for Negro national liberation as expressed in the slogan of the right of self-determination. In regard to this slogan he says "at best it *suggests segregation* for the Negro tenth of our population, at worst it invites *race war*." Why does Mr. Thomas seek to identify the slogans of right of self-determination with the imperialist policy of segregation, a policy directed to enforcing the isolation of the Negro people

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as a condition for preserving their economic, social and political inequality? It is clear that in the Black Belt the struggle against segregation is bound up with and is a part of the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist land-owners' dictatorship in this territory, the establishment of the right of the Negro majority to determine their own fate without forceful interference from without, to set up their own state institutions, (administrative, legislative, etc.) corresponding to the need of the majority of the population. This means the confiscation of the land of the big white landlords and capitalists (the material basis of their power over the Negro masses) in favor of the toilers, the establishment of the state unity of the Black Belt under the rule and in keeping with the interests of the Negro people, and withdrawal of the armed forces of the white imperialist ruling class from this Negro territory. This is the real meaning of the right of self-determination. Only through the struggle for the realization of this demand can an end be put to the imperialist policy of segregation. It is clear, therefore, that the purpose of Mr. Thomas in identifying the slogan of the right of self-determination with the imperialist policy of segregation is to sow confusion in the ranks of the Negro and white toilers and in this manner hinder the real struggle against segregation.

This same purpose is carried a step further by Mr. Thomas in his contention that "this slogan invites race war." There can be no doubt that what Mr. Thomas is pleased to call "race war" is in actuality the national liberation war of the Negro people against segregation and all forms of national oppression, *i.e.,* the struggle for equal rights and the right of self-determination in the Black Belt. Therefore by the use of the bourgeois term "race war" he attempts to interpret the national rebellion of the Negro peoples for land and freedom, not as a struggle of the Negro masses supported by the revolutionary white working class, but as a struggle between the Negro people on one side and the whole white people on the other side. In this Mr. Thomas accepts completely the bourgeois race theory of immutable antagonisms between Negroes and whites, including the workers of both races. It follows that in order to avert "race wars" the Negro people must accept lynching, Jim-Crowism, etc., and on the other hand, the white workers must not support the struggles of the Negro masses. Thus by obscuring the real class essence of the Negro national liberation movement, Mr. Thomas seeks to confuse the workers, perpetuate the division between Negro and white toilers, and strengthen white chauvinism. In this demagogic formula, there is again revealed the Socialist program on the Negro question, which rejects the struggle for Negro

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rights on the ground that this struggle is inimical to the interests of the working class. Under the hypocritical cloak of pretending to be opposed to segregation, Mr. Thomas and the Socialist Party endorse the white slave-drivers' status quo of lynching and oppression of the Negro people. Inasmuch as the mass movement organized and led by the Communist Party constitutes a serious threat to this outrageous system, it is quite natural that Mr. Thomas should be found on the side of the lynchers and against the masses.

Against this reactionary united front of imperialist slave drivers and their Negro and white reformist lackeys the Communist Party alone stands out as the only force championing, organizing and leading the struggles of the Negro people and white toilers against national oppression and for the overthrow of the system which breeds lynchings and Scottsboros.

The struggle for the lives of the Scottsboro boys shows clearly who are the friends and who are the enemies of the Negro people. Scottsboro strengthened the differentiation among the Negro people, winning masses away from the treachery of the Negro reformists, thus tremendously increasing the revolutionary experience of the Negro masses. Scottsboro marks a further step in the achievement of the revolutionary hegemony of the proletariat and the leadership of the Communist Patry, in the Negro liberation movement. Scottsboro, by drawing millions of toilers, Negroes and whites, into a struggle for Negro rights, is a great step forward in the education of the workers in a spirit of working class internationalism. Thus, Scottsboro stands out as an historic landmark in the liberation movement of the Negro people and in the revolutionary labor movement in general.

NEXT STEPS IN SCOTTSBORO

The series of partial victories in the battle for the unconditional release of the Scottsboro boys, and particularly the latest victory, is complete vindication of the effectiveness of revolutionary mass struggle to defeat the attempts of the bourgeoisie to carry through its drive of terror and suppression. But this must not be construed to mean that the struggle is already over. Now more than ever before it is necessary to strengthen and broaden the ranks of solidarity of the Negro and white toilers. Now more than ever before, it is necessary to enlist new fighters, new blood, new masses, to compel the instruments of reaction to hand over the Scottsboro boys unharmed and untouched. It is essential, both politically and organizationally, to strengthen a hundred fold the united front of the masses as the only guarantee for the complete freedom of the Negro boys.

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In this, we must sharpen the character of the fight against and exposure of the Socialist leaders and Negro reformists, as the main social supports of imperialist Jim-Crow reaction in the ranks of the Negro and white toilers. In regard to the Negro reformists, we must guard against two mistakes which have been manifested in the Scottsboro campaign and in the struggle against lynching. The first is the underestimation of the class rôle of Negro reformism. This arises from failure to distinguish clearly between the national reformist tendency as based upon the Negro bourgeoisie and its alliance with the imperialist ruling classes, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the national revolutionary tendency of the Negro masses against the oppression of the white ruling classes. It was this mistake which, especially in the first stages of the Scottsboro struggle, led to a tendency to lag at the tail of the Negro bourgeois reformists, as witnessed particularly in the failure to expose their "left" agents among the masses, such as Pickens, to anticipate the inevitable betrayal of these fakers and to prepare the masses for this betrayal. This mistake led to a whole series of errors in our strategy and tactics in the Scottsboro campaign, which, in the main, were as follows: tendency to resist the political broadening out and deepening of the campaign by systematically linking it up with the general and specific economic and political demands of the Negro people and the working class; a hesitancy in bringing forth and popularizing our full Negro program (self-determination, equal rights, confiscation of land), in the course of the Scottsboro campaign. This underestimation of Negro reformism was glaringly manifested in the "united front from the top" maneouvers with petty-bourgeois leaders of Negro mass organizations, "friendly" ministers, and so forth, leading to a situation in many places where the mass movement, to a certain extent, was left to the mercies of these agents of the bourgeoisie.

The second mistake consists in the mechanical indentification of the Negro reformists with the ruling imperialist bourgeoisie. This is revealed in the tendency to replace real political exposure of the Negro reformists by vulgar name-calling and noisy phrases

On the basis of relentless struggle against both of these deviations, coupled with the correct political exposure of the Negro reformists, it is necessary to at once establish the broadest united front of all elements among the Negro and white peoples ready to fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys.

We must carry the struggle for the Scottsboro boys outside the narrow periphery of the I.L.D. and our mass revolutionary organizations, greatly widening its organizational base to include even the

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most backward masses of toilers. Scottsboro committees must be set up in the neighborhoods, with particular emphasis on the Negro neighborhoods, in factories, particularly where large numbers of Negroes are employed, in Jim-Crow schools, etc.

These elementary united front organizational forms have been historically proven to be the most effective in rallying the widest masses in the struggles around burning issues, for the development of the initiative and self-activity of the masses. Organized on the basis of struggle for the Scottsboro boys these committees in the course of broadening out the movement through the systematic introduction of other immediate issues confronting the Negro masses, can become the basis for more permanent organizations—unemployed block committees, factory and shop organizations. This line of development was shown clearly in the initial stages of the Scottsboro campaign where the Scottsboro defense committees, organized on the basis of neighborhoods, actually became the basis in many places for building up of the unemployed movement among the Negroes.

At the same time, the revolutionary mass organizations under the leadership of the Party and the I.L.D. must become the main driving force in this united front and must be drawn into more active participation by setting up Scottsboro committees in their own organizations to initiate and broaden the work among the masses of workers under their leadership linked up with the issues confronting these workers.

The further development of the struggle for the release of the Scottsboro boys must be linked up more effectively with the struggle against Negro persecution in all localities as well as with the struggle against the general capitalist offensive. Scottsboro must be brought into every action of the working class against the offensive—strikes, unemployed demonstrations, farmers' struggles, etc.

With the shifting back of the fate of the boys to the Alabama courts, the struggle for their release must have as its major point of concentration—the South. The unemployed movement in Birmingham, the development of the croppers' movement in the lower South, the struggles against the terror, offer us the base for a real mass fight right in the very area of the lynch court.

The Scottsboro defense must be raised to a higher level of activity and organization and must be used as a rallying point for the development of a tremendous nation-wide mass movement against lynching as a vital link in the struggle for national liberation of the Negro people, and in the winning of the masses for the revolutionary counter-offensive against the imperialist bourgeoisie.

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The Expanding Inter-Imperialist Wars in South America

By WILLIAM SIMONS

> "The Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. is of the opinion that the main task of all Communist Parties is to organize and lead the struggle of the workers, peasants, and all the toilers for the defense of China and the Chinese revolution, for the defense of the fatherland of the workers of all countries, the U.S.S.R., against the closely approaching intervention and for the defense of the toilers of capitalist countries against a new imperialist war." (From the Resolution on the War in the Far East, adopted by the Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International).*

What relation do the wars in Latin America bear to this main task of all the Communist Parties, including our own? The resolution referred to above "while recognizing the undoubtedly favorable results in the work of the Communist Parties in imperialist and colonial countries in the matter of mobilizing the masses against imperialist war and against preparations for military intervention" declares that "the mass anti-war campaign has developed slowly, partly because of an opportunist underestimation of the war in the Far East and also because of a leftist-fatalistic, frivolous attitude to the war."

This characterization is particularly true with regard to the wars in Latin America. Bolivia and Paraguay slipped into an undeclared war, Colombia and Peru similarly began hostilities without any declaration of war; but we in the United States are not sufficiently mobilizing the masses of workers, farmers, students and intellectuals, against these growing wars in Latin America. Proper understanding of the real significance of these wars is a necessary condition for a mass campaign against them.

NATURE OF THE WARS IN LATIN AMERICA

Just as for a long time many workers looked upon the war in

* See pamphlet, *Capitalist Stabilization Has Ended,* Workers Library Publishers. 10c.

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the Far East as a remote issue, not tied up with the danger of a new world war and of an attack upon the Soviet Union, so the wars in South America are considered as unimportant, local and isolated events, as insignificant wars between small, insignificant countries. This estimate is false. The existing wars in Latin America are an important factor in the development of a new world war and in the hastening of preparations for attack upon the Soviet Union. These wars are but the beginning of a series of conflicts that threaten to engulf the entire South American continent, and the countries of the Caribbean. They are due to intensified rivalry between American and British imperialism, in their struggle for redivision of Latin America and for world domination, and for the preparations for attack on the Soviet Union. They confirm the correctness of the position of the Communist International in 1928 that the relative gains of American imperialism at the expense of Great Britain did not diminish the intensity of the struggle between these powers, but on the contrary sharpened that struggle. A recent example is the recognition by Great Britain of the Martinez government in El Salvador, against the wishes of the United States government. The civil wars in Brazil and in other Latin American countries reflect similarly the conflicting interests of American and British imperialism.

Oil, nitrates, copper and tin are some of the resources eagerly sought by the imperialist powers, and for which native governments are instigated to fight one another, in the interest of either American or British imperialism, the two most powerful imperialist countries judged by their interests in Latin America. In a letter to the Communist Parties of South America, dated August 3, the South American Bureau of the Communist International stated that "war is the center of the entire political life of Latin America." These wars are not only instigated by the imperialist powers, seeking a way out of the deepening crisis, but the native landlord-bourgeois governments which carry through these wars do so because they see in them a way out of the crisis for themselves, as well as the crushing of the revolutionary movement in their countries. Colombia and Bolivia are lined up with American imperialism, while Peru and Paraguay are under British influence. American imperialism instigated Bolivia's seizure of the Chaco, after its failure to obtain this oil region by "peaceful" means. The imperialist powers seek an exclusive monopoly of oil, to assure its transport and exploitation at the lowest price, and to strengthen their position in Latin America as a base for world domination. Bolivian jingoists may cry for an outlet to the sea through the Rio de la Plata, but it is the voice of Standard Oil, asking to transport its oil. Paraguayan chauvinists

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may cry out that Bolivia is violating the sovereignty of Paraguay, but the voice is the voice of Downing Street. Standard Oil versus the Royal Dutch Shell is the line up.

LATIN AMERICA A TINDER BOX

Frontier boundary disputes furnish the pretexts for the actual and potential wars. These disputes are of long standing, the Bolivia-Paraguay dispute dating back fifty years. The reason why these countries now resort to arms is because of the discovery of oil. The reason for the struggle between Colombia and Peru over Leticia (seemingly a barren wasteland) is the recent discovery of oil in that region. The intention of grabbing resources explains also the boundary disputes of Chile and Peru over Tacna-Arica, of Venezuela and Colombia, of Guatemala and Honduras, and of Panama and Costa Rica, all of which can break out into open warfare at any moment.

That there is real danger of the entire continent becoming involved in war is proved by the sending of troops to their frontiers by many countries, of course for "defensive purposes," Argentina announcing its aim "to watch its frontiers and to prevent raids on Argentine territory." Argentina sent troops to the frontier, because in the Chaco, Argentina citizens, according to 1929 figures, owned approximately half of the land, employed on their enterprises over half of the Paraguayan inhabitants, owned half of the cattle, four-fifths of the railroad mileage, and owned more than half of the capital invested in the Chaco. How much of this is British capital is difficult to establish. A border struggle has already taken place between troops of Peru and Ecuador; the latter has recently ordered a registration for military service, pretending neutrality, but actually in support of Colombia. Argentine and Uruguay broke off relations, as did Mexico and Peru. With pretexts of boundary claims, with steady troop movements, with the native landlord-bourgeois governments seeking a way out of the crisis for themselves and for either American or British imperialism, Latin America is a veritable tinder box, ready to burst into flames at the first opportunity.

THE WAR FRONT WIDENS

This situation is not changed by the action of the so-called neutrals, but rather confirmed. "Neutrals" like Colombia and Peru, seemingly attempting to bring peace between Bolivia and Paraguay, have extended the war front to include themselves. American im-

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perialism created its band of so-called neutrals, formed by the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Colombia and Uruguay, while Great Britain countered with its stalwarts: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru. American and British imperialism were thus creating not a "neutral" front, but an actual war front, for the extension of the wars throughout Latin America. The United States followed the same "neutral" line, when it proposed as mediator in the 1928 dispute between Chile and Peru over Tacna and Arica that these ports be given over to Bolivia.

The League of Nations now considering a report of its subcommittee on the Bolivia-Paraguay war will of course back Great Britain, the recent entry of Argentina into the League of Nations gives added support to Great Britain and the League of Nations, as against the United States government and the Pan-American Union. The rumored withdrawal of Mexico from the League of Nations seems to be a United States move in this imperialist chess game.

NATIVE GOVERNMENTS BREED WAR HYSTERIA

In all of the warring countries, the governments have mobilized the church, the schools, the press, radio and the movies in appeals to the masses to join the armies. Workers are recruited in the factories for the front. The Boy Scouts, as in Colombia, are giving every possible assistance to the war. Collections are taken up for war, utilizing the school children. Taxes are laid on wages of public employees. A chauvinist spirit is engendered, even worse than during the anti-Communist drive in Guatemala early this year.

Reformist leaders are coming to the aid of their warring governments. Socialist leaders in Bolivia argue that "The war between Bolivia and Paraguay must put an end to the crisis, bring about better conditions for the workers. An outlet to the sea will bring industrial development and eliminate unemployment." Social-fascist leaders of the Oil Workers' Union in Barranquilla, Colombia, called on their members not to engage in strikes or other activities which could hinder the war plans of the government. The A.P.R.A. in Peru, led by Haya de la Torre, has declared its support of the Sancho Cerro government in the war against Colombia, while the Apristas in Colombia support the Colombian government. The Spanish-American Student Federation has issued a statement against Peru and for Colombia (which means for Yankee imperialism). Even some of the landlord-bourgeois governments now speak demagogically of favoring "Socialism" and "nationalization." Yes, "War is the center of the entire political life of Latin America."

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ANTI-WAR FIGHT BY THE SOUTH AMERICAN PARTIES

The Communist Parties of Latin America are carrying on a courageous struggle against war, although the struggle is as yet weak and inadequate. In Colombia, the Communist Party took an uncompromising stand against the Colombia-Peruvian war; it mobilized huge anti-war demonstrations in Bogota, Barranquilla and in other cities and towns. Many revolutionary unions issued anti-war manifestos. Anti-war demonstrations were held in La Paz, Bolivia. In Paraguay, 500 soldiers refused to go to the front. The respective governments then unloosed a wave of unbridled terror against the anti-war movement and in particular against the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions. In Colombia, the offices of *Tierra* (organ of the Communist Party) were smashed up and the paper banned; the police raided the headquarters of the Communist Party, and 500 of the best revolutionary fighters still lie in jail. In La Paz, Bolivia, eight leaders of the anti-war demonstrations were shot by court martial. The 500 Paraguayan soldiers were arrested and held for trial. Despite this, the workers and peasants continue to struggle. Along the Rio Magdalena, in Colombia, the longshoremen went on strike. Sections of the peasantry in important rural centers of Colombia have refused to contribute toward the "national defense" fund.

The anti-war struggle in South America is taking on a more militant character, becoming more of a mass movement. National anti-war congresses have been held; on July 24 in Argentina, with 120 organizations represented, and on September 2, in Uruguay, with 147 organizations. On the occasion of the breaking off of relations between Argentina and Uruguay, a joint manifesto was issued by the General Confederation of Labor of Uruguay, and the Class Struggle Trade Union Committee of Argentina. A joint manifesto was issued by the General Confederation of Labor of Brazil, the Labor Federation of Chile, and the Workers Confederation of Peru. For November 7, there was announced at Montevideo, Uruguay, a South American Anti-War Congress.

The development of the anti-war struggle by the South American Parties was hindered by wrong conceptions among the workers and among many Party members. These errors, which have been largely liquidated within the Parties but which still linger among large sections of workers are the following:

1. "That the struggle for bread is already the struggle against war." This theory was expressed in a Manifesto, issued by the Communist Party, to the packing house workers in Avellaneda, Argentina, and accounts for the failure of the Communist Party of Argentina

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to organize specific acts against war, as for example, the stopping of shipment of foodstuffs from Argentina to the imperialist armies.

2. "That the governments of Latin America would not participate actively in the war, but would use it to weaken their dependence on foreign imperialism." The theory of the decolonization of Latin America by means of war (combatted in the Colonial Thesis of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International) and the consequent possibility of a united front of all classes including the native bourgeoisie against imperialism is of Trotskyite origin (in Argentina).

3. "The Soviet Union will be able to defend itself. Furthermore the sharpening of the crisis makes impossible an imperialist war against the Soviet Union. The imperialists will not attack the Soviet Union, because war will immediately bring revolution." A systematic campaign is being waged against this conception by the Communist Parties in South America.

These conceptions, social-democratic in their origin, keep the toiling masses from fighting against imperialist war and from defending the Soviet Union. The opening of offices in Latin America by the Socialist Youth and by the Amsterdam Trade Unions increases the number of imperialist agents attempting to fool the masses into imperialist war. The Communists in South America are trying to create a broad united front against imperialist war, winning over particularly the rank and file anarchists and Socialists who are sympathetic to the Soivet Union, at the same time carrying on a constant struggle against the Socialist and anarchist leaders, who support imperialist war plans.

THE PERSPECTIVE IN LATIN AMERICA

What is the perspective in Latin America in connection with these wars? In the Thesis on the international situation adopted by the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. the Latin American countries are grouped with India as countries where "the development of the revolutionary crisis is retarded primarily by the low degree of organization of the proletariat and the immaturity of the Communist Parties." The problem faced by the Communist Parties in South America is to strengthen their contact with the masses, to lead their every day struggles against the offensive of capital, to develop mass actions against war, but at every stage to propagate the revolutionary way out of the crisis and out of the war, through the establishment of a workers' and farmers' government based on Soviets of the workers, farmers, Indians, and soldiers and sailors.

The slogans under which they are conducting their anti-war fight

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are: "Not a kilo of meat, not a bushel of wheat, no nitrates, no copper, no men or arms for murdering our brothers, the peoples of Latin America! Against imperialism and its lackeys! Against the criminal companies! Against the large landowners! The expulsion of the imperialist firms from Latin America! Against all the exploiters, let us form a united front of the workers, farmers and Indians. The widest fraternization at home as well as at the front." One of the aims of the native bourgeois-landlord governments is to exterminate the oppressed national minorities, the Indians and the Negroes, who constitute a majority of the population of Latin America. The struggle for self-determination of the Indians and the Negroes is therefore an important part of the struggle against the wars in Latin America.

The establishment of Soviets in many places in the course of the anti-war struggle, on a local and perhaps national scale, can be looked forward to. Already in Chile, during the June 4-5 uprising this year that brought Davila to power, local Soviets were established in Santiago and in some mining towns. The degree to which this movement for Soviets is realized in practice will depend on the ability of the Communist Parties to win over the broad masses through struggle.

SUPPORT BY THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS

The need for support to the anti-war movement in South America follows from: 1) The colonial and semi-colonial nature of these countries. 2) The wars in South America are an attempt of American imperialism to solve the crisis at home. 3) Our comrades in South America by fighting against the plans of American (and British) imperialism are hindering imperialism in finding a way out of the crisis, hindering their preparations for the attack upon the Soviet Union. 4) These arguments, added to the need of fighting primarily against our "own" bourgeoisie, dictate support to the anti-war movement in Latin America.

The resolution of the Fifteenth Plenum of our Central Committee held in September declared that:

> "The struggle against imperialist war, which becomes increasingly important and pressing each day, must be seriously strengthened. The lag in this work since the Fourteenth Plenum, revealed in our agitation, but especially in the dropping off of the number of special actions (against shipment of munitions, against Japanese imperialism) and in the inadequate August First demonstrations reveals weaknesses which must be overcome. The most systematic and energetic efforts must be made to carry out the directives given

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for this campaign, to rouse a mass movement against American imperialism and its war preparations, to defend the Chinese people, and to build a living wall of defense around the workers' fatherland, the Soviet Union." (*The Communist,* October, 1932).

But our support to the anti-war movement in Latin America has been insignificant. There is no perceptible improvement in our anti-war work in general. The movement for the creation of a broad united front against imperialist war is making very little headway, because it is neither receiving the support of the Party committees nor of the mass organizations under Party influence. The significance of the Amsterdam World Congress Against War, both in its preparatory stages and in the follow up, has not been brought home to the working class nor even to the Party membership. The broadening united front against war in France should be an example to us of the possibility of uniting Communist, Socialist and non-Party workers, as well as other sincere opponents of imperialist war, in one fighting front. But we suffer from two weaknesses: 1) underestimation of the war situation, and 2) sectarian security that war will automatically bring revolution. A basic weakness is the failure to link up our anti-war activity with the every day work among the unemployed and in the shops. This results from the mistaken theory that to fight against war we must first build up strong mass organizations, instead of seeing that the mass organizations will grow during the struggle against war, as well as during other struggles around immediate demands.

Munitions were sent to Colombia and Brazil by manufacturers in Bridgeport and New Haven, Connecticut. The Colombian government bought a boat in Hoboken, New Jersey, for transporting troops. Yet not only did we not stop the shipment of munitions, but our Party district committee in Connecticut is not making a real effort to establish definite contacts with munition workers in Bridgeport, so as to know of the movement of war materials. Contact with munition factories, the setting up of action committees inside of them, and the development of protest strikes and economic strikes to prevent the transport of munitions is a primary task for all district committees which have munition factories in their territory. The organization of anti-war committees among the unemployed, in the shops and on the ships, and in the workers fraternal and benefit societies should be one of the main tasks of the Party district committees. These anti-war committees should work together with the American Committee Against War in the creation of the widest possible anti-imperialist war front, to carry out the decisions of the Amsterdam World Congress Against Imperialist War. The revo-

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lutionary trade unions and revolutionary oppositions, in particular, should take an active part in this work. But there are few if any indications of such cooperation. As far as most of the revolutionary trade unions are concerned, the Amsterdam World Congress Against War never took place. This situation should be changed quickly; the Communist fractions in the trade unions and in the other mass organizations should immediately raise the anti-war issue and support the American Committee Against War.

ASSISTING THE COLONIAL STRUGGLES

The same tactics of waiting until we first get strong through unemployment and strike struggles is in evidence in our colonial work. Support of the every day struggles of the unemployed and of shop workers in the colonial and semi-colonial countries means weakening our "own" bosses in the United States. Yet our support is woefully inadequate. Not because we do not know what our tasks are. These were clearly indicated in the Colonial Thesis of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International. This thesis tells us:

> "Only in so far as the Communist Parties of the imperialist countries render in fact practical assistance to the revolutionary movement in the colonies, in so far as their help actually facilitates the struggle of the corresponding colonial countries against imperialism, can their position in the colonial question be recognized as a genuinely Bolshevik one."*

Our district committees still treat Central Committee instructions on colonial work as mere scraps of paper. The California and Seattle Districts still fail to carry on any consistent campaign for Philippine independence and against the terror in the Philippine Islands. The Chicago District, despite repeated indications from the Central Committee and despite repeated promises, does nothing on behalf of the movement it has "adopted" (Mexico). The Pittsburgh District last December 6, the anniversary of the Colombian Banana Strike Massacre, failed to carry on an educational campaign among their memebrship, after a detailed outline had been sent to them by the Central Committee. How long will this continue, comrades? There must be a radical change of attitude toward this work. Underestimation of the colonial question at this stage, when the wars in Latin America have an important world significance, means underestimation of the danger of world war. The war situa-

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* See pamphlet, *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies.* Workers Library Publishers. 15c.

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tion in Latin America, bringing with it magnified terror against the revolutionary masses, demands of every Party district committee, immediate fulfillment of the pledge of effective support to the revolutionary movement in the country they have "adopted." Neglect on this field can no longer be tolerated. The campaign of the Anti-Imperialist League on behalf of the colonies should be supported by the Party district committees.

CARRY OUT THE MONTEVIDEO SOLIDARITY PACT

On September 12, 1932, the Executive Committee of the Latin American Trade Union Confederation reminded the Trade Union Unity League by letter, of Point 4 in the Solidarity Pact signed at Montevideo in May, 1929 by representatives of both organizations, which calls for joint struggle against imperialism in general, and in particular against wars instigated by imperialist powers in Latin America. This pledge should be made effective by the Trade Union Unity League, its respective national industrial unions, and the revolutionary opposition movements. The National Committee of the Trade Union Unity League, after drawing up a plan of action against the wars in Latin America should call a conference of representatives of the national industrial unions to put this plan into practice.

Support to the revolutionary movement in the colonies, clearly outlined in the Colonial Thesis of the Sixth World Congress must be given not in promises, but in deeds. The existing and potential wars in Latin America should occupy a prominent place in the anti-war work of the Party.

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The United Front — A Tactic Of Struggle, Not Peace

By JOHN WILLIAMSON

DURING the month of October, the unemployed workers of Chicago, under the general leadership of the Unemployed Councils, scored a decisive victory, in forcing the withdrawal of the 50% relief cut put into effect against the 160,000 family men, out of a total of 750,000 unemployed in Chicago. This victory is all the more significant because it was done in the face of a concerted offensive against the unemployed, including the murdering of one unemployed worker, adding of more police to crush the struggles of the workers and serious efforts to deport 20% of all getting relief because they were foreign-born workers. In carrying through the Cook County Hunger March on October 31st, which sent an elected delegation of 75 to the City and County authorities, the workers scored a second victory, namely, marching through the "loop," passing the City Hall, tying up all traffic for more than an hour, despite the defiant "No" of Mayor Cermak, which he had to retreat from at the last moment.

All of the activities and struggles (described in my article in *Daily Worker* as well as article of B. K. Gebert), leading to the Cook County Hunger March were carried through despite the systematic sabotage of the leaders of the Chicago Workers' Committee, the Socialist Party, the Farmer Labor Party, and the Chicago Federation of Labor.

This victory was secured because of the proper application of the united front tactic. Being sensitive to what was happening, the Unemployed Councils utilized this 50% relief cut as the burning central immediate issue around which to organize tens of thousands of workers, including especially those in the reformist-led Chicago Workers Committee on Unemployment and the Workers League of America (controlled by ex-Proletarian Party members). The united front tactic is the organization of the broadest masses of workers, regardless of organizational affiliation, on the basis of a burning issue or issues affecting their very life. Here was such an issue. The united

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front is a tactic of struggle, against the bourgeoisie and the state power, and therefore it directs its main blow against the bosses' agents who parade in the ranks of the workers. The united front is not a maneuver, but grows out of the very life of the workers—the need for organized struggle to defeat the attacks of the boss class. In this light the united front had its application, not in the mere conferences held, but in organizing of joint struggles of members of these reformist led organizations, members of the Unemployed Councils and unorganized workers in the various neighborhoods, at relief stations and homes of aldermen as well as in the various mass delegations sent to the City Council, culminating later in the huge united front conference and the tremendous Cook County Hunger March.

While resolutions may easily be unanimously accepted, in the actual course of the class struggle and the application of Party policy, we see the extent of understanding and agreement with such Party policies. This recent experience has revealed among a small section of the Party membership various unclarities which may be classified under the following headings:

1) That the united front tactic is a sort of truce or civil peace with the reformist leaders of the other organizations, while we unite on the immediate problems.

2) That we shall criticize the program of these reformist led organizations, but not the leaders.

3. That we should wait until after these reformist leaders betray and then criticize them, but give them a chance now, since they say they want to go along.

4) That if they don't attack us, we should not criticize them.

5) That we unite jointly the membership of all organizations, participating in the united front and liquidate the independent life and existence of the Unemployed Councils.

Because of the recent entry of many workers into our Party, the insufficient ideological training in the Party and the lack of experience with the real application of the united front tactic, these unclarities can be expected, although they must be sharply corrected, and the members holding these views are readily convinced.

The wrong ideas, however, are now theorized by a more experienced comrade, such as Comrade Verblin, in his present article, and these ideas were sharply and crassly presented by Comrade Goldman in the united front conference, where his speech was a direct attack upon the Party line, following the Party spokesman. While Comrade Verblin utters some mild "correction" of Goldman, politically their position is one. Both of these comrades develop

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full-blossomed opportunist ideas, which must be analyzed and sharply rooted out.

Passing over the inaccurate statement of Verblin in the Party committee that "this is the first time we have had an opportunity to apply the united front tactic in the U. S. A.," we see throughout the entire article that Verblin does not see the class line of differentiation between our Party and the reformists, and furthermore draws no distinction between the rank and file and the leaders such as Borders, Schneid, Dixon, McVey, etc. This is seen in such statements as "in spite of these bitter disagreements it was found possible to unite on the immediate issue of the struggle against the bosses" or "the fact that so many different organizations united for struggle against the capitalists is of tremendous significance." Comrade Verblin does not see that it was the united front of the rank and file at the bottom which forced these social reformist and "left" leaders to go along against their will, while they tried daily to disrupt the united front, and when their own rank and file defeated them, they then sabotaged the united front. Borders and Company were against all forms of local struggles but many of their rank and file participated. Borders and Company were against political banners, but in a first conference where they had the majority, they were defeated 100 to 74. Borders and Company wanted to withdraw but in their own caucus were defeated 74 to 18. Borders and Company wanted only 50,000 leaflets and two days distribution, but their rank and file together with the Unemployed Councils, Communist Party, and others distributed over 200,000 leaflets. After all this they then tried to disrupt the parade at the last minute by printing in the *Forwards* separate gathering places than those agreed upon. And yet Comrade Verblin sees these leaders "uniting for struggle against the capitalists." From these wrong concepts it is a mere step to an attitude of considering "that it makes no difference who leads the united front—Communist Party, Socialist Party, Farmer Labor Party—they are all going along together." While Comrade Verblin does not yet state this, it is the next logical step and Goldman did say he is "willing to accept anyone (reformist leaders—J. W.) joining the united front at his word." We must always keep in mind that there is only one working class Party, and that is the Communist Party.

A further wrong conception in Verblin's article is failure to see the united front as a tactic of struggle. In answering his own question "What is the purpose of the united front" he sees only that "Communists are anxious to defend the immediate interests of the working class, and they know that a united working class can better defend

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its interests, can gain better conditions for itself and fight more effectively against fascism and capitalist terror than a divided working class." But, dear Comrade Verblin, there exists social fascism and its leaders, particularly its "left" and most dangerous variety such as Mr. Borders. Therefore, in order to "better defend its interests" the working class must also fight against their most dangerous enemy—the social fascist leaders. We must understand that the united front is not a truce or civil peace. It will suffice here to make two quotations:

> "The tactic of the united front was and is a method of revolution and not of peaceful evolution." (Fifth Congress C.I.)
> "The united front tactic means a most irreconcilable struggle against the reformist and social-democratic organizations for the masses." (From a report by Manuilsky at the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.)

In this situation the "left" variety of reformists are the most dangerous. The best example of this is the Illinois mining situation, where the Pizaks, Allards, etc., put over the $5.00 scale when Lewis and Walker could not do so. The fact that these people have such a history is why they whine so much when attacked by the Communist Party. The talk of personal honesty, sincerity, etc., as in the case of Borders, means nothing and is a cover for treachery.

All of these previously listed opportunist conceptions of Verblin lead him to the most outstanding, which is given its crassest expression in a speech before the Party committee. Here he says: "Our aim is not so much that we expose the leadership (Borders, Schneid, McVey) but that the leadership exposes itself." This is only a variation of the idea of "waiting until they betray and then criticize" as expressed by Goldman at the united front conference. These comrades would make us believe that we are dealing with some naive, virgin pure, misled workers. *We are not.* We are and were dealing at this united front conference with leaders who have personally misled and betrayed workers before and who are today a part of the leadership of the Socialist Party, Amalgamated Clothing Workers and Chicago Federation of Labor, which are the most dangerous enemies of the workers in these present struggles. Do we have to wait and see what McVey will do? What Schneid will do? What Borders will do? We know. Not only have they a history—a black one, but we also have their deeds during this very united front struggle. We must not only expose them today, as was done, but also point out that history. We must warn the workers *now*—not after the new deed of betrayal has been committed. What sort of a Communist Party delegation would we have which would sit through a conference and not raise their voices against the leaders of the

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Socialist Party, Farmer Labor Party, Proletarian Party and Trotskyites? Furthermore the speech of Williamson did not limit itself only to denunciation, but in major part dealt with the proper methods to make the Hunger March a success. The criticism of these "left" phrase-mongering reformist leaders was not a terrible crime as Verblin would have us believe, but was the revolutionary duty of the Party spokesman to the workers. All comrades should read carefully the resolution of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and note this quotation:

> "There is an opportunist slurring over differences of principle when applying the tactics of the united front . . . only by strict differentiation between social-democratic leaders and workers will the Communists be able by means of the united front from below to break down the wall which often separates them from the social-democratic workers."*

Comrade Verblin, (probably because he is removed from the workers), confuses his own opportunist reactions with the reactions of the rank and file of the Borders movement and the Workers' League, so he states "Williamson's statement did not succeed in winning over any of the rank and file delegates of the organizations that were not under the leadership of the Communists. On the contrary, it antagonized them." First of all we must establish the fact that Williamson's speech did not only deal with past betrayals but referred as well to the sharp differences over fundamental questions in the present united front struggle against the 50% relief cut and showed the correct methods of struggle to win victory. The theory that this sharp criticism of the reformist leaders, not only there, but at previous conferences, repulsed the majority of the rank and file is not correct. The Unemployed Council made no move without informing the workers, including the membership of the Borders movement and the Workers' League. The first letter sent was printed in thousands of copies and distributed to the members. The attitude of the rank and file of the Borders movement and Workers' League is seen in the following incidents:

1) By a vote of 100 to 74 the Unemployed Council motion was carried at a conference of delegates from branches of each organization, eliminating the clause "to not inject politics or carry political banners" from the Call.

2) Joint local action of at least a dozen branches of the Borders movement and several of the Workers' League.

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* See pamphlet, *Capitalist Stabilization Has Ended,* Workers Library Publishers. 10c.

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3) Election of Weber as chairman of the United Front Conference over Borders, by a vote of 360 to 94.

4) Rejection of a resolution proposing withdrawal from the Hunger March in a caucus called by Borders, Dixon and McVey by a vote of 74 to 18.

Does that look like antagonism?

There were certain weaknesses in my speech, but not from the viewpoint of these comrades. It omitted, because other comrades had been assigned to deal with it, as well as because we were operating under strict parliamentary procedure with reference to time, such important issues as the unity of employed and unemployed, the question of unemployment insurance, and also omitted mention of the leadership of the Workers' League, which might have left the impression that Dixon was better than Borders, which he is not despite his more liberal use of revolutionary phraseology in his attacks upon the Communists.

Lastly, we must emphasize that the united front is not a unification of all organizations. Throughout the entire united front action, the Unemployed Councils must maintain their own identity, their own activity, and must build themselves through their leadership in the mass struggles against the boss class and in spite of the reformist leadership of the other organizations.

* * *

While combatting the theories and practices of Verblin and Goldman as the most dangerous, we must also combat certain sectarian ideas. These take the form of becoming panic-stricken that we go into a united front in which there are reformist leaders. Contrary to Comrade Verblin's opinion that we must only appeal to the leaders when he says: "There was only one way to get the biggest majority of the workers in the other organizations to join us in the struggle and that was by getting their organizations as such to make a united front" or "Simply and solely to appeal to the rank and file means in practice to attempt to win individual workers over to our viewpoint . . . but to get the great majority . . . it is imperative that we reach them through their organizations," we emphasize that the united front must be with the rank and file. We do take the position that if some of these reformist leaders are still elected by these workers as their spokesmen, then we are not afraid of them. This sectarian tendency of being afraid—of crawling back into our own shell—is not limited to an isolated individual in the Chicago District Committee, but is a characteristic danger in applying the united front which must be smashed.

* * *

While emphasizing the basically correct application of the united

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front tactic in the struggle to defeat the 50% relief cut in Chicago, we must also see that here was one of our first experiences on such a broad scale and certain definite shortcomings both during and after the Hunger March must be recognized. These can be indicated briefly as:

1) Limited form of united front, including primarily the unemployed with no real effort to involve the trade unions in the leadership of the movement.

2) Agreeing to a federated system of committee representation from only the three organizations of unemployed, thus keeping out other working class organizations and unions, as well as limiting the democratic elections of the workers.

3) No systematic penetration of factories. Issuance of two leaflets at Stockyards and Western Electric.

4) Unions and other mass organizations which did respond, were not involved sufficiently. Tendency to limit exerything to united front committee.

5) Local united front struggles and "Action Committees" did not penetrate every locality but were limited to 11 and 12 scattered localities.

6) National Hunger March not linked up sufficiently and Bonus March to Washington not at all.

7) Very inadequate recruiting of new members for the Unemployed Council as well as for the Party.

An outstanding shortcoming, which can yet be overcome is the failure to consolidate and extend the united front of the workers in the neighborhoods after the Cook County Hunger March and withdrawal of the relief cut. This should have been continued on the basis of the other demands adopted as well as new local issues. Instead of this taking place, there are dangerous tendencies of being satisfied, and there was not carried through a systematic reporting of the Hunger March, its demands and victories to the workers. Neither has there been a marked increase in local struggles except in a few isolated sections. The fight around the issue of the Relief Commission forcing all unemployed to give up their insurance policies was a good next step but has been handicapped by limiting it to mere picketing and delegations. The organizing in a few days of a mass delegation of unemployed, including representatives of eleven locals of the Progressive Miners of America and two American Federation of Labor locals to the emergency session of the Illinois Legislature and its conduct, was the next proper step.

All of these activities must involve masses in the neighborhoods, shops and unions. The united front against unemployment and

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starvation, under the leadership of the Unemployed Councils with the Party as an active participant, must be intensified and consolidated. Let us remember a statement of Comrade Manuilsky at the Tenth Plenum, where he says:

> "The results of each united front action must be organizationally consolidated. We must not be satisfied with the successes of one spontaneous action . . . in which our Party succeeded in influencing the broad masses of workers . . . and believe they are already captured. We are not 'knights of an hour' who exert their influence only now and then in time of great class conflict. We are the Party of the working class which constantly seeks to exert and strengthen its influence on the masses."

These experiences of Chicago must be studied by the entire Party membership. Especially must we understand that opportunist and sectarian proposals arise primarily in the course of applying Party policy in mass struggle, and must be sharply exposed and corrected. This concrete experience must serve to intensify the ideological activity and raise the political level of the Party membership through discussions in the Party units and more intensive activity amongst the masses. This experience should be studied in the light of the resolution of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. which is specifically elaborated in a recent editorial in the *Communist International,* saying:

> "The E.C.C.I. must call upon all the sections of the C.I. to exercise greatest watchfulness in the preparation of the masses for decisive revolutionary struggles of the masses and for a merciless struggle against the reviving right opportunism, a struggle against this main danger as well as against its feeding "left" sectarianism which leads to passivity, to a refusal to participate in revolutionary struggles, to capitulation before social-democracy."

We are printing below the article by Comrade Verblin whose wrong line is refuted by Comrade Williamson in his article.—Editors.

* * *

The United Front in Chicago

By A. VERBLIN

ON October 31, a huge number of Chicago workers, variously estimated between 25 and 50 thousand, demonstrated in Grant Park, protesting against the fifty per cent cut in the miserable relief allotments granted to the Chicago unemployed. These workers

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demonstrated under the banners of various organizations. There were represented the Unemployed Councils of Chicago; the Workers' Committee on Unemployment; the Workers' League; the Communist, Socialist, and Farmer-Labor Parties, and many other working class organizations. For the first time in the history of the labor movement in Chicago, did so many workers enrolled in so many different organizations, unite in one demonstration.

It is needless to say that there were fundamental differences and disagreements between the organizations participating; but in spite of these bitter disagreements it was found possible to unite on the immediate issue of the struggle against the attempts of the bosses actually to murder thousands of workers by starvation.

This in itself, that is, the fact that so many different organizations united for struggle against the capitalists is of tremendous significance. To set huge numbers of workers into motion against the capitalist class is always of great importance to the revolutionary movement even if the demands on the basis of which the workers were mobilized for struggle are very minor and immediate in their nature. Nothing revolutionizes workers so much, nothing makes them see so clearly the necessity for a revolutionary struggle as participation in any action against the bosses, even though the object of that action is attainable within the bounds of the capitalist system.

But to the members of the Communist Party the united front achieved in Chicago has additional significance. Our theory and tactic of the united front has been actually put into practice. We have talked about it. We have discussed it for many years. But we never knew what it actually was. What are the results as far as the Party is concerned? Has it gained any strength in numbers and influence? Have we made any blunders in our attitude in any stage of the process in the formation of the united front? An analysis of all the steps is necessary to draw the important lessons and to guard against any mistakes in the future.

The approximately fifty per cent cut in the relief allotment furnished a burning issue upon which to mobilize the masses for a united struggle. It was an issue that hit about one hundred and fifty thousand working class families of Chicago directly and many thousands more indirectly because those whose allotment had been cut would have to be aided by their relatives and friends who were still working. No better issue could have arisen for the purpose of uniting all of the unemployed and employed workers in a struggle not only against the cut in relief, but for more relief and against the whole hunger regime of the capitalist masters.

There were three organizations representing the unemployed

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workers of Chicago: the Unemployed Councils, under militant Communist leadership, claiming to embrace a membership of about ten thousand, and having a wide influence amongst the unemployed; the Workers' Committee on Unemployment under Socialist leadership claiming a membership of about fifteen thousand, and the Workers' League led by left wing Proletarian Party elements claiming a membership of about three thousand.

The Unemployed Councils, with a record of many militant struggles on behalf of the unemployed, took the initiative and issued a call addressed to the various locals of the other organizations representing the unemployed and to many working class organizations such as the International Workers' Order, American Federation of Labor, Trade Union Unity League, etc., calling for a united front conference for the purpose of organizing a struggle against the cut in relief. How many delegates would have come and how many organizations outside of the revolutionary organizations would have participated had the conference remained as originally intended, is impossible to tell. Judging from past experience, one is safe in hazarding the guess that all of the revolutionary organizations would have sent delegates, and perhaps a half dozen other organizations, and we would have had our usual united front.

At any rate, we need not waste time speculating. The united front conference took a different turn when the Unemployed Councils sent a letter to the central bodies of the Workers' Committee on Unemployment and the Workers' League asking for a joint conference to organize a united front struggle of all workers for the rescission of the fifty per cent cut in relief, for cash payment to all single workers, and other slogans of vital interest to the unemployed masses.

Was that a correct tactic? There can be no two opinions about that. It certainly was correct. There was only one way to get the biggest majority of the workers in the other organizations to join us in the struggle and that was by getting their organizations as such to make a united front with the Unemployed Councils. After the ground had been prepared by an agitation among the rank and file, it was necessary and proper to send an invitation to the organizations. The leaders of these organizations were then placed in a position where to refuse to accept the offer of the Unemployed Councils for a united front would have meant a possible revolt of the rank and file. No excuse was given them that they were not invited. Was that tactic a violation of the principle of the united front from below? Assuredly not. The aim was to unite with the rank and file. That is why an agitation was first started amongst the rank and file. But the rank and file could best be reached through their

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organizations. Simply and solely to appeal to the rank and file means in practice to attempt to win individual workers over to our view point, and to get these individual workers to join us in the struggle. That, of course, is necessary and in the long run we shall succeed in winning over the vast majority of the workers to our side. But to get the biggest majority of the workers of a different organization to join us for an immediate struggle, it is imperative that we reach them through their organization.

The leaders of the two organizations that received the call for a united front from the Unemployed Councils accepted. They could not afford to arouse the resentment of the rank and file by refusing. The desire of the workers for a united front was too keen for the leaders flatly to refuse any such invitation as was extended by the Unemployed Councils.

It was agreed that a preliminary conference of fifteen delegates from each of the three organizations of unemployed be held. At that conference an agreement in principle was arrived at on the main demands, such as against the cut in food, no evictions, and cash relief for single and married workers. The three things upon which there was more or less serious disagreement were the following: 1) holding of a hunger march with or without a permit; 2) question of permitting political banners in the march; 3) local struggle. With reference to the first point upon which there was a disagreement, some of the delegates of the Unemployed Councils were inclined to insist that the preliminary conference accept in principle the position that the Hunger March should take place regardless of permit. The Workers' Committee on Unemployment refused to agree to that. The Workers' League agreed with the Unemployed Councils.

The Workers' Committee and Workers' League insisted that the conference go on record prohibiting the carrying of political banners. The Unemployed Councils took the position that any workers' organization participating in the hunger march should be allowed to carry any banners it pleased. The Unemployed Councils proposed that local demonstrations of all organizations be organized in front of relief centers and in front of the homes of city and state officials. The leaders of the Workers' Committee were opposed to demonstrations in front of relief centers, and half-heartedly consented to demonstrations in front of homes of city and state officials, provided permits were obtained. In subsequent conferences another question arose upon which there was disagreement, the question of inserting a special demand for Negro rights, the Unemployed Councils insisting upon such a demand, and the Workers' Committee opposing it.

It is obvious that in a united front composed of various working

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class organizations with different political viewpoints, there are bound to arise questions upon which there is lack of agreement. What policy should Communists follow under such conditions?

Necessarily it is impossible to lay down a general rule applicable to every kind of disagreement, and under all circumstances. Every demand or slogan giving cause to disagreement must be analyzed in relation to the objective of the united front struggle, the relative importance of the particular demand and other factors that are difficult to mention because they are unforeseeable.

If the disagreement should involve a basic demand, it would be justifiable to break off all negotiations and appeal to the rank and file to force their leaders to accede to the demand. For instance, if the leaders of the Workers' Committee had refused to accept the demand of fighting against the full fifty per cent cut and advocated that the workers should ask that only half of the cut in relief be rescinded, it would have been the duty of the Unemployed Councils to refuse to proceed.

But if the leadership of the Socialist-led organizations should accept the fundamental demands and reject other demands, then the Communists should state their position clearly upon such demands as were rejected and not break the united front because of the rejection. The Communists can then explain to the workers why they were in favor of the rejected demands and tell the workers that in spite of the rejection of these demands they would continue to fight together for the main demands.

In this united front the emphasis was placed on a huge hunger march to the city hall. The refusal of the Socialists to join in the united front struggles to fight together on a local basis was a clear indication of their unwillingness to fight; but in view of the circumstances a strong statement by the Unemployed Councils explaining their attitude in the matter and showing the workers that the Unemployed Councils, in spite of the refusal of the Socialists to fight locally, were willing to continue the united front, was the correct policy. The same applies to the question of a special demand for Negro rights. In this case, the situation demanded a very sharp and clear statement for both white and Negro workers showing the attitude of the Unemployed Councils.

On the question of marching with or without a permit, it was correct for the Unemployed Councils to insist on that principle, but it would have been incorrect to break the united front before a permit would be refused.

Where the Socialists put forth a demand as a precondition to their joining the united front such as they threatened to do with the proposal that no political banners be permitted in the hunger march, the

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Communists have a more difficult problem to solve than in the case where the Socialists reject a demand put forth by the Communists. Again it depends upon the nature of the demand and all factors should be taken into consideration. The fundamental consideration must always be that the workers shall be convinced that the Communists are the ones who are most sincerely and anxiously striving to unite them on the basis of their immediate demands and only differences of the most fundamental nature will cause them to refuse to unite with any organization of workers for the purpose of a common struggle against the bosses.

The joint committee of the three organizations issued a call to all working class organizations to send delegates to a general conference for the purpose of involving all working class organizations in the proposed united struggle. Over seven hundred delegates attended, a majority coming from organizations sympathetic to the Communist movement. There were only ten locals from the American Federation of Labor represented. Socialist Party locals, Farmer-Labor Party locals, Workers' League locals, and Workers' Committee locals sent most of the delegates who were either definitely opposed to the Communist movement, or not in any way under the influence of the Communist Party. Four Khaki Shirt delegates were present.

The small number of American Federation of Labor locals was a serious shortcoming, but can be attributed to the lack of time to create the necessary agitation amongst the rank and file of the American Federation of Labor.

All of the political organizations represented at the conference had an opportunity to make a statement on their attitude towards the united front. Comrade Williamson made the statement on behalf of the Communist Party. After a short general analysis of the situation, Williamson launched into an attack on Borders, the Socialist leader of the Workers' Committee on Unemployment, and upon the Socialist and Farmer-Labor Parties, and asserted that the Communist Party does not unite with the leaders, but with the rank and file.

The statement brought forth great applause from most of the delegates representing organizations sympathetic with the Communist Party and boos and hisses from most of the other delegates. Some of the delegates who are members of the Party and some sympathizers were very uneasy at the evident hostility with which practically all of the delegates from the organizations not under the influence of the Communist Party greeted Williamson's statement. After the conference this uneasiness developed into dissatisfaction in the case of quite a few Party members. It is therefore necessary and absolutely essential that Williamson's statement be subjected to very close

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scrutiny so that clarity can be achieved, and either those comrades who are dissatisfied become convinced that the statement was correct, or else that Williamson and those who support his viewpoint become convinced that they are in error. It is important for the whole Party, and not only for the Chicago membership because similar problems are bound to arise in the future all over the country.

It is obvious that Williamson's statement did not have one of the effects a statement under the circumstances should have had. It did not succeed in winning over any of the rank and file delegates of the organizations that were not under the leadership of the Communists. On the contrary, it antagonized not only them but it antagonized some sympathizers and created uneasiness and dissatisfaction in the case of quite a few Party members. If that is the fact, and I cannot see how that can be honestly denied, then the conclusion is inevitable that there was something radically wrong with the statement.

What is the purpose of the united front? Why do Communists want a united front? For the simple reason that Communists are anxious to defend the immediate interests of the working class, and they know that a united working class can better defend its interests, can gain better conditions for itself and fight more effectively against fascism and capitalist terror than a divided working class. Communists have no interests separate and apart from the interests of the working class as a whole, and will at all times defend those interests with all the strength they possess.

But a united front of the worker, once achieved, will have other and very important results besides the one of achieving a certain immediate demand of the working class. It will set great masses of workers in motion against the capitalist class, and the struggle will make the workers more militant, more class-conscious, and therefore more sympathetic with the principles and tactics of the Communist Party. And it will show the workers, in the process of a struggle, that the Communists are the most militant, the most capable and conscientious fighters for the interests of the masses. It will convince the workers, through experience, that the leaders of the Socialist Party are not interested in fighting even for their immediate demands, let alone for the final overthrow of the capitalist system. The united front tactic, when correctly applied, will either compel the Socialist leaders to fight or stand exposed for what they really are, betrayers of the interests of the working class. Should the Socialists refuse to participate in a united front, then the refusal will be evidence of their unwillingness to struggle and thus place themselves in a compromising position in the eyes of the workers.

The above statements are elementary truths that should be self-evident to all members of our Party who know anything at all about

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the tactic of the united front. It is the key that will unlock the door separating the masses, under the influence of the reformists, from the Communist Party. More than any other tactic it will enable us to win these masses over to our side as against the social-democratic betrayers.

But in the process of forming the united front we must be exceedingly careful. We must insist upon our right freely to criticize our opponents. The united front should never degenerate into a truce where all differences are forgotten and thus leave the reformists undisturbed and happy. But our criticism and condemnation of the reformists must be carried on in such a way as to convince the workers who are still under their influence that the Communists are anxious to struggle unitedly with all the workers regardless of their distrust of and disagreement with the reformists.

This is not an easy task. It requires great skill and adroitness, but it is absolutely necessary to acquire that skill. Otherwise the united front will not gain us prestige in the eyes of the masses in the camp of the reformists.

It is not sufficient to criticize the reformists merely on the basis of what is happening in Germany, England, or Milwaukee. That should not be omitted, of course. But we must realize that the workers under the influence of the reformists will best be convinced of the correctness of our criticism if that criticism has reference to the immediate slogans and demands involved in the particular united front struggle.

From that point of view, Williamson's statement was deficient. He criticized the Socialist Party and American Federation of Labor leaders by a simple reference to the fact that their "history is a history of betrayals" without even mentioning particular incidents in that history. Obviously the workers following the reformers either do not know that history, or are not convinced that it is a history of betrayals; otherwise they would not be following the reformist leaders at the present time. The statement further criticized Karl Borders, the leader of the Workers' Committee for what he did in the past, and only incidentally touched upon his position in the present united front struggle.

It was necessary that the statement clearly should enunciate the position of the Party on all of the controversial questions of the united front struggle. There were propositions which the Communists in the Unemployed Councils had advanced but which were rejected by the reformists. The statement should have dealt mainly with those propositions; it should have shown to the rank and file delegates in the camp of the reformists why the Communists favored those proposals and why it was necessary for the delegates to insist

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that their leaders accept those proposals. The statement should have shown to the rank and file delegates in a very friendly and comradely way that the failure of their leadership to accept those proposals weakened the struggle; it should have severely and mercilessly criticized the reformist leadership for rejecting those proposals, but at the same time it should have been made clear that in spite of that rejection the Communists were still anxious to struggle with the working masses.

On the basis of the attitude of the reformists on the immediate demands and slogans involved in the particular united front struggle should the Communists expose the reformists and thus win over the masses following those reformists. We should not omit what the Socialists have done on previous occasions and in different countries, but we should rather stress the immediate problems and criticize in such a way that the workers in the reformist camp should clearly realize that the Communists are sincerely and anxiously determined to fight unitedly with them in spite of the reformist leaders.

Some comrades claim that the above tactic sounds like advocating that the social reformists be handled with silk gloves. The basis of this claim is the totally erroneous idea that the emphasis must be placed on the loudness of our name-calling and not on the convincing nature of our criticism. It is not a question of silk gloves or mailed fists, but a question of convincing those workers who do not agree with us and we must determine the nature of our arguments upon that basis alone.

In this connection it is well to analyze the position of Comrade Albert Goldman, attorney for the International Labor Defense, as indicated in his speech before the conference. While he is not a member of the Party, he is very close to the Party and his speech, coming as it did right after Comrade Williamson's statement, had the effect of a polemic against that statement. In substance Goldman said that he would be willing to accept any one joining the united front struggle at his word and would criticize and expose him if he weakens in the united front struggle and betrays the interests of the workers during that struggle.

If by that Goldman meant that we should forget past betrayals of the reformist leaders and have faith in their assurances that they are willing to join in a united front for struggle against the bosses and criticize them only when they do something during the struggle contrary to the interests of the workers, he is absolutely wrong. And since his statement can be interpreted to mean that, he was utterly incorrect in making it.

We cannot, and should not forget the past betrayals of the reformist leaders. We must plainly tell the workers that because we Com-

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munists believe that the reformist leaders have betrayed the workers in the past, we do not, and cannot, have complete faith in their assurances at the present, but regardless of that, we are willing to join in a united struggle for the immediate demands of the workers for which the reformist leaders also claim they are willing to struggle.

It is undoubtedly true that during the struggle the reformist leaders will expose themselves as cowards and betrayers of the masses. The Communists should seize upon every betrayal, upon every act of cowardice during the struggle to expose these Socialist and American Federation of Labor leaders. In this way the exposing of the Socialists and other reformists will be much more effective than a simple statement that we have no faith in them because of their past betrayals.

We must take into consideration that at a time when workers of different political faiths are uniting for the purpose of a common struggle against the bosses, any unskillful attack upon the reformist leaders might be interperted by the workers following the reformists as unnecessary and disruptive, and alienate them from us rather than attract them to us. Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the proposition that the workers will be won over to our side by exposing the reformist leaders in their actions in the immediate struggle.

The idea uppermost in the mind of Comrade Williamson when he prepared that statement should have been to state the position of the Communist Party in such a way as to attract those workers under the influence of the Socialists and other reformists to the position of the Communist Party. But obviously Comrade Williamson had only one idea, and that was to attack the Socialists—the Socialists and American Federation of Labor leadership. We must, and should, attack; but in such a way that the effect left on the minds of the workers opposed to us is that the Communists are willing to struggle regardless of any differences with other parties and organizations. This Comrade Williamson did not succeed in doing, and therefore his statement is deficient.

In the united front struggle in Chicago, the Communist Party succeeded in winning a great many workers over to its side. Not because Comrade Williamson made an unskillful statement, savagely attacking the Socialist and American Federation of Labor leadership on the basis of what they did in the past and in other places, but because during the struggle the Communists showed that they were the best fighters, the best organizers, the most militant and conscientious workers. If our statements and speeches would be as good as our actions in the actual struggle are militant, the Socialist and reformist leaders would soon lose all their following.

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Distorters of the Revolutionary Heritage of the American Proletariat

THE TRADITIONS OF CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

By JAMES S. ALLEN

I

INVALUABLE experiences and lessons for the working class which for the most part still remain buried in American history are still to be excavated and made an integral part of the experiences of today. The whole question of the revolutionary heritage and traditions of the working class in the United States has been tackled only in parts and only in a partly Marxist-Leninist manner. We have permitted the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois historians unchallenged not only to interpret in their way the history of their class but also to misinterpret the history of our class. In whatever conflicts carried on in this sphere we have permitted the pretenders to Marxism to enter the lists as representatives of the working class.

With us, the Party of the working class, this is far from being purely an "academic" matter. It becomes a question of life and death. For it is a part of the general task of developing on all fronts the clearly defined, independent position of the proletariat, so that it can go to battle with all its weapons in good order, so that it can present an indomitable fighting front on all sectors of the class war.

So far have the treasures of American history remained hidden treasures that the conception is prevalent that there was only one revolutionary period in American history, the struggle for independence from England, and even this period has not been submitted to analysis from the vantage point of Marxism-Leninism. The treasures of another revolutionary period, the Civil War and reconstruction—so full of invaluable lessons to the working class especially in regard to the Negro question—have been almost entirely ignored. It is either not recognized as a *revolutionary* period or its revolutionary content is so diluted that it is unrecognizable as being in

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direct line of ascent toward the proletarian revolution. This second stage in the American bourgeois-democratic revolution, separated by almost a century from the first, remains for us also separated from the development of the social revolution. The task still waits for incorporating its experiences in the living body of Marxism-Leninism.

It is inevitable that the pressing nature of the Negro question today, the problems met with in clarifying the Communist position on this question, should lead us back to Civil War and reconstruction since it was there that much of the groundwork was laid for the present oppression of the Negroes. A proper analysis of this period becomes a practical need of the present day. And just as inevitably must our opponents turn to this period in an effort to find historical content for their opposition to the slogan of the right of self-determination for the Negroes as raised by the Party. In this opposition the "also-Marxist" Thomas and the "also-Leninist" Herberg have found common ground. The also-Marxist Thomas, loath to announce openly that he is not in favor of the principle of self-determination, denies the existence of the Black Belt and its historical content. The also-Leninist Herberg, unwilling to concede the revolutionary potentialities of the national liberation struggle of the Negro people, distorts history and reshuffles its contents. A subtle division of labor with but one aim: to rob the working class of an indispensable ally in the struggle against imperialism.

"From the vantage of the revolutionary proletarian viewpoint, by means of the historical dialectics of Marxism," Herberg searches for that "new perspective" of the Civil War which will lend body to the Lovestoneite perspective on the Negro question. His article, "The Civil War in New Perspective," is published appropriately enough in V. F. Calverton's magazine, *The Modern Quarterly* (1932, No. 2).

Herberg opens with an excellent quotation from Lenin:

> "The best representatives of the American proletariat are those expressing the revolutionary tradition in the life of the American people. This tradition originated in the war of liberation against the English in the 18th century and in the Civil War in the 19th century . . . Where can you find an American so pedantic, so absolutely idiotic as to deny the revolutionary and progressive significance of the American Civil War of 1860-65?"

By implication, Herberg, and through him the Lovestoneites, on the strength of the "revolutionary traditions" uncovered in his article, lay claim to being the "best representatives of the American proletariat." And what are these revolutionary traditions of the American people that Herberg finds in the Civil War and which *he* claims for the proletariat? Says Herberg in grand finale:

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"There were giants in those days because it was an age demanding and creating giants. The great figures that led the abolition and radical hosts in desperate battle deserve the profoundest respect of the revolutionist of today, of every man who prizes liberty and human progress. Thad Stevens, the indomitable warrior, the Great Commoner, whose badge of honor is the frantic hate that the slave-owners and their spiritual descendants have heaped upon his memory for generations; Charles Sumner, the incorruptible, the incarnate heart and conscience of the nation, holding ideals and principles far above party and place; Wendell Phillips, the fiery-tongued abolitionist, the invincible tribune of the friendless and oppressed, the living bond between yesterday and today, between the war against chattel slavery and the struggle against capitalist wage-slavery. To the revolutionists of today belongs their tradition and not to the lily white party of Hoover the slave-trader!

"We are the truer guardians—let us claim our heritage!"

This is what Herberg gleans in the way of revolutionary traditions for the "revolutionist of today" from a period rich in experiences and lessons for the proletariat and for the Negro people! His researches can only produce this panegyric to *bourgeois* revolutionists and petty-bourgeois reformers. He slurs over and re-buries the traditions that can be of use *to the proletariat* today, claiming for himself, in the name of dialectic materialism, the task of restoring to the bourgeoisie a tradition which it itself was quick to forget and only too ready to disown. Neither the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat will thank him for his gift: the former because it has long since lost the need for revolutionary traditions; the latter because it seeks its revolutionary traditions in another way and in another content. Only "Marxist-Leninists" of the stripe of the *Modern Quarterly*-ites and the Lovestoneites can make use of such traditions—to submerge the real revolutionary heritage of the proletariat.

The Civil War and reconstruction was a bourgeois revolution in the sense that all that was required of it by history and all that lay in its power to accomplish could be carried through under the leadership of the bourgeoisie and within the bounds of bourgeois democracy. History was not ambiguous in the task allotted to the bourgeoisie: its minimum demand was the overthrow of the slavocracy, the complete destruction of the economic and political power of the Southern bourbons. The further expansion of capitalism required the annihilation of this backward, reactionary slavocracy which at every turn placed obstacles in the path of Northern industry and free agriculture, acted like a drag on the young, still progressive, "rarin' to go" bourgeoisie. The economic, and therefore the political, power of the feudal lords of the South rested upon slavery. Emancipation

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and bourgeois freedom for the Negroes would strike the death blow to the pre-capitalist power of the South.

Yet both the political struggle that preceded the clash of arms and the war itself were marked by the most disgraceful compromising and vacillating on the part of the bourgeoisie. The representatives of the "free" North in Congress were like a pack of old women haggling over constitutional forms, conceding one victory after another to the slave power, while the bourbon power allied with the Copperhead Democrats of the North pressed from one advantage to another, easily enough finding legal clothing taken from the wardrobe of the bourgeois-democratic constitution with which to cover its usurpations. In the typical fashion of petty-bourgeois democrats, torn between the gathering force of the industrial bourgeoisie and the insistent, self-reliant slave power, Northern statesmen continued right up to the war to cede one point after another to their opponent. With the "inevitable conflict" already inaugurated by the South at Fort Sumter, with secession declared, with the Confederacy in being, the venerable and learned Northerners continued to bury their noses in law books seeking further compromises for their revolution, ready to grant the South almost anything it asked. Lincoln and his compromisers, the petty-bourgeoisie incarnate, entered the battle field with the cry of "Save the Union," when history demanded the full throated challenge of emancipation.

Even through the first two years of the war, bourgeois democracy continued to suffer from what Marx calls "that incurable malady *parliamentary cretenism,* a disorder which penetrates its unfortunate victims with the solemn conviction that the whole world, its history and future, are governed and determined by a majority of votes in that particular representative body which has the honor to count them among its members."* The North was preoccupied with the "constitutionality" of raising funds for the war, of raising an army, of even the war itself, when everything depended upon a quick, decisive offensive; it was occupied with negotiations with the slave-owners of the border states when the moment demanded an immediate victory in these very border states. All of which led Marx to remark in a letter to Engels (August 7, 1862), chiding him for his lack of faith in the final victory of the North caused by its vacillating policy and its early defeats:

> "It seems to me that the long and short of the whole matter is that the present war [Civil War] will have to be carried on in a revolutionary manner, and that until now the Yankees have tried to

* ***Revolution and Counter-Revolution,*** London, p. 109.

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> carry it on in a constitutional manner . . . The North will finally carry on the war in earnest and employ revolutionary means and cast aside the domination of the border slaves statesmen."*

So blinded is the bourgeois democracy in its blustering, week-kneed youth, that it does not recognize the inner springs of its own development nor the historical aims of its revolution. Thus the ruling diplomats of the North failed to see the necessity of freeing the slaves if they were to conquer the South. They stepped on the toes of history and history gave them a powerful kick in the buttocks driving them headlong to the fulfilment of the minimum requirements of the epoch. Thus Lincoln and his compromisers literally stumbled upon emancipation, although it had been laying on the path of history for even the blind to see. In the words of Marx, "The North itself converted slavery into a military force of the South, instead of turning it against the South." While the North was probing its constitution for ways and means of carrying on the war, the slave-owners released all their man power almost immediately because production was guaranteed by slave labor. An immediate declaration of emancipation by the North at the outbreak of the war would have released a tremendous revolutionary force to play havoc with the bourbons' rear. But in time history administered its kick in the form of continued Confederate victories in the border states which removed all doubts in Lincoln's mind that anything was to be gained by negotiations with the border states slave-owners.

The bourgeois revolution also produced its agents, those who, while not always conscious of their rôle, held the prod of progress in their hands and pricked on those who were wavering, uncertain, afraid before the immensity of the task allotted them. Such an agent, above anyone else, was the consistent bourgeois-democrat Thaddeus Stevens, leader of the radical Republicans, outstanding representative of the industrial bourgeoisie of the Northeast whose interests were in direct conflict with those of the slave owners and which demanded as a prerequisite for its own further development the complete destruction of the bourbon power. Less consistent, because strongly influenced by petty-bourgeois reformism, were Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips and the bourgeois abolitionists. Our "present-day revolutionist" Herberg insists on lumping these different and to some degree opposing currents within the bourgeois democracy, without any regard, as we shall see further, to the class content of the forces aligned on the side of the North.

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* *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe, Dritte Abteilung, Der Briefwechsel zwischen Marx und Engels,* Marx-Engels Verlag, Berlin, Band 3, p. 92.

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Unlike the abolitionists, who at the secession of the Southern states waved their hands in fright and cried, shopkeeper-fashion: "Let the erring states depart in peace," Stevens consistently fought every compromise and organized and led the radical Republican forces toward the seizure of the reins of the revolution from the hands of the petty-bourgeoisie. The bourgeois revolution had found its leader when it needed him most, although it was reluctant to accept him, frightened by the passion, the stubborness, the fighting partisan spirit (as if revolution can mean anything but partisanship), the logical expression of the policy demanded by the revolutionary epoch. The distinct contribution of the bourgeois abolitionists is that they recognized the necessity for emancipation. It was Stevens however, more than anyone else, who recognized the whole revolutionary content of the period for the bourgeoisie, who led the forces that brought about the political defeat of Johnson, the Copperheads and the compromisers during the year immediately following the war and inaugurated the period of Congressional Reconstruction (1866-1877) which at least at the beginning set the form for the complete reorganization of the South.

With the defeat of the South on the battlefield and the emancipation of the slaves the revolution had only completed its first cycle. The "conquered provinces" subdued by force of arms, had still to be conquered and subdued for capitalism. The tasks were clear: the slave-owners were to be deprived of their last vestige of economic and political power, all grounds for an attempt at restoration removed. This could only be done by the armed dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, *supported by the armed Negro people,* which would carry through a revolutionary change in the system of landownership, expropriating the former landowners and dividing their lands among the Negroes; which would give this fundamental change in the economic basis of Southern society political expression in the enfranchisement of the Negroes, drawing these new peasant proprietors within the orbit of bourgeois democracy. "Only now, after the phase of the Civil War," says Marx, "has the United States really entered the revolutionary phase and the European wiseacres, who believe in the omnipotence of Mr. Johnson [then still in the saddle at Washington], will soon be disillusioned."* With these words Marx not only showed a penetrating understanding of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, but, as we shall shortly see, a point of view in regard to the class forces of the revolution quite "innocently" ignored by Herberg in his search for the "new perspective."

The Civil War and reconstruction was a bourgeois-democratic

* *Briefwechsel,* Band 3, p. 328.

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revolution both in its social content and in its method of struggle. But within itself it carried all the class and, as yet incipient, national antagonisms of bourgeois society. The bourgeoisie could not enter on the course of revolution without at the same time drawing along with it the popular masses in both the North and South, thus broadening the scope of the class struggle and drawing within its orbit not only the huge body of freedmen but also the backward "poor whites" of the South. Beginning with the abolitionists, the revolutionary movement against the slave power found its mass support among the workers of the North, the free farmers of the Northwest, the free farmers and workers of the Southern border states and, with rapidly increasing significance, among the Negroes. During reconstruction the principal mass support of the revolution was the Negro people.

In relation to the traditions of the bourgeois revolution we must uncover—for the philistines have taken good care to bury—that tradition of the bourgeois revolution which bears the imprint of the *independent* action of the proletariat and the toiling masses, *as weak or as imperfect as that may be.* In relation to the bourgeois revolution as a whole it is our task to uncover the inner springs of that revolution, its historical aims and how far it has fallen short in their accomplishment, for the bourgeoisie has never stopped to contemplate seriously the conditions of its own stormy appearance on the scene of history, nor seen the perspective of its own inevitable disappearance. Approaching the second task without regard to the first, as Herberg does, leads to ignoring the seeds of the proletarian revolution buried in the soil of the bourgeois revolution. This, in turn, leads not only to a distortion of the whole period, but to blunting the revolutionary heritage of the working class and thus obscuring its own independent class position today.

To cloak his new perspective with Marxism, Herberg uses only those quotations from Marx which deal with the nature of the revolution in general or show the limitations of the bourgeoisie. But both Marx and Engels were highly concerned with the next stage, with the proletarian revolution, and it was solely from this point of view that they hailed the victory of the North. Engels, disgusted with the North's policy of compromise, wrote to Marx on November 15, 1862:

> "On the one hand it is well that the bourgeois republic has so thoroughly disgraced itself in America also, so that in the future *it can never again be preached on its own merits, but only as a means and transitional form to the social revolution,* although one is peeved that a lousy oligarchy of only half the number of inhabi-

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> tants has proved itself just as strong as the clumsy, big, helpless democracy."* (Italics mine, J.S.A.).

"Only as a means and a transitional form to the social revolution"—that is the main import of the victory of the North, that was the reason that the revolutionary proletariat both in Europe and America supported the North. The solution of the question of slavery was necessary before the solution of the question of wage-slavery could be undertaken with any degree of success in America. Only then could the American working class enter upon the scene of history in its own capacity as a revolutionary class. Discussing the experiences of the European revolutions of 1848-51, Marx gives classic expression to the relation of the proletarian to the bourgeois revolution:

> "The working class movement itself never is independent, never is of an *exclusively proletarian* character until all the different factions of the middle class, and particularly its most progressive faction, the large manufacturers, have conquered political power, and remodelled the state according to their wants. It is then that the inevitable conflict between the employer and the employed becomes imminent, and cannot be adjourned any longer; that the working class can no longer be put off with delusive hopes and promises never to be realized; that the great problem of the nineteenth century, the abolition of the proletariat, is at last brought forward fairly and in its proper light."† (Italics mine, J.S.A.).

Herberg quotes from the Address of the International Workingmen's Association to President Lincoln, which was written by Marx, congratulating the American people upon their struggles against slavocracy and upon Lincoln's re-election in the face of the powerful Democratic opposition in the North. Herberg extracts a few words in passing from this part of the Address: "If resistance to the slave power was the watchword of your election, the triumphal war-cry of your re-election is Death to Slavery." But he fails to point out, that this, as well as the whole address, was written in the name of the revolutionary proletariat precisely to recapitulate the main points at issue in the conflict and remind Lincoln, whom Marx characterized elsewhere as a "narrow formalistic lawyer,"‡ of the minimum

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* *Briefwechsel,* Band 3, p. 109.

† *Revolution and Counter-Revolution,* pp. 8-9.

‡ On the eve of the re-election of Lincoln, Marx wrote to Engels (September 7, 1864), leaving no doubt as to his estimate of Lincoln's predilections as a petty-bourgeois and of the forces at work which were bound to have their way: "Since the beginning of the war this [the elections of 1864] is undoubtedly the most critical point. If this is shifted, then old Lincoln can blunder on to his heart's content . . . If Lincoln comes through—which is

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tasks demanded of him by the revolution. This whole letter has the nature of a prod from the proletariat. And to leave no doubt as to the basis upon which the working class of Europe and the North supported the revolution, Marx says:

> "The workingmen of Europe felt sure that as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendency for the middle class, so the American Anti-Slavery War will do for the working classes.*

That this was too much for the petty-bourgeois Lincoln is shown in the reply which was written for Lincoln by Charles Francis Adams, the United States Minister in London, the kernel of which is:

> "The government of the United States of America has a clear consciousness that its policy neither is, nor could be, reactionary; but at the same time it adheres to the course which it adopted at the beginning of abstaining everywhere from propagandism and unlawful intervention. It strives to do equal justice to all states and to all men, and it relies upon the beneficial results of that effort for support at home, and for respect and good will throughout the world."*

Thus the bourgeoisie served notice on the proletariat that while it was quite willing to accept its support, it would resist any attempt of the proletariat to enter the struggle on its own account.

A whole period of industrial development in the North had intervened between the war of 1812 with England and the Civil War. The very growth of the plantation system in the South which had so rapidly built the power of the slave-owners, supplied the cheap cotton necessary for the textile industry both in England and in New England. The textile industry was the first to develop on a large scale in the North; it was in its center, New England, where the power of the industrial bourgeoisie first developed. It was here also that the abolition movement arose and gained momentum with the increasing industrialization of the Northeast. It is important to note—what Herberg forgets—that since 1830 there had been a sizeable organized labor movement in the North which had come to

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certain—it will be on a completely radical platform and under entirely changed circumstances. The old man will then, in accordance with his juridical manner, find radical methods compatible with his conscience. (*Briefwechsel,* Band 3, p. 192).

* The address is published in full in Herman Schleuter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery,* pp. 189-190.

• Ibid., p. 192.

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blows with the bourgeoisie on its own account long before the outbreak of the Civil War. And what is of special significance in the problem under discussion, this labor movement had advanced its own independent position as distinct from that of the bourgeois abolitionists in regard to the slavery question. Although the working class could not because of its youth and inexperience grasp the full implications of the struggle against slavery yet class-consciousness was strong enough for it to realize that the existence of slavery was a direct threat to and competitor of free labor. So preoccupied is Herberg with claiming the bourgeois abolitionist tradition for the proletariat that he fails to even notice that one month after William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* first appeared in Boston on January 1, 1831, a workers' convention met in Boston under the name "New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics and other Workingmen." *The purpose of this convention was to organize an independent political labor party.* In the very first issue of the *Liberator* Garrison, leader of the abolitionists, opposed the agitation for the formation of a working class party and decried the "attempt . . . to inflame the minds of our working classes against the more opulent, and to persuade men that they are condemned and oppressed by a wealthy aristocracy."

From the very beginning of the abolition movement a class line was evident, with the organized workers taking the position that wage-slavery as well as chattel slavery must be done away with.

> "The abolitionists denied the very existence of 'white slavery'," says Herman Schleuter, in his book *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery.* "They opposed the spokesmen of the workingmen who in their speeches and articles used the term 'white slavery', and flatly denied that wage workers were slaves. The abolitionists, indeed, evinced so little understanding of the rising movement of the workingmen that they denied them the right of independent organization, of making separate demands as a class, and of securing their special interests." (pp. 39-40).

It was not in bourgeois circles but principally among the unorganized workers of the Northeast that the bourgeois abolitionists found their mass support. For the unorganized and semi-proletarians, still lacking class-consciousness, were not yet aware of the immediacy to them of wage-slavery. Speaking of the early abolition movement, a writer of New England says:

> "The anti-slavery movement was not strongest in the more educated classes, but was predominantly a people's movement, based on the simplest human instincts and far stronger for a time in the factories and shoe shops than in the pulpits or colleges."*

* Thomas W. Higginson, *Cheerful Yesterdays,* pp. 115-117, cited by Schleuter.

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With the resurgence of the labor movement in the 1840's the same conflict arose between the bourgeois and working class abolitionists and persisted in varying degree down to the Civil War. For the worker-abolitionists the rallying cry, in the words of William West, a Boston worker, was: "Down with all slavery, both chattel and wages." A convention of New England workers held at Lynn, Mass., in 1846, when the war was impending with Mexico over the possession of Texas—a war for the direct benefit of the slave-owners for whom continual expansion was a matter of life or death—took sides unhesitantly against the war and slavery. The action of these workers lies in the direct line of the revolutionary tradition which Herberg overlooks and which the proletariat will not.

> "Whereas—reads the resolution passed by this convention—there are at present three million of our brethren and sisters groaning in chains on the Southern plantations; and, whereas, we wish not only to be consistent, but to secure to all others those rights and privileges for which we are contending ourselves; therefore . . .
>
> "Resolved . . . we will not take up arms to sustain the Southern slaveholders in robbing one-fifth of our countrymen of their labor.
>
> "Resolved, that we recommend our brethren to speak out in thunder tones, both as associations and as individuals, and to let it no longer be said that Northern laborers, while they are contending for their rights, are a standing army to keep three millions of their brethren and sisters in bondage at the point of the bayonet."*

No revolutionary working class meeting today would hesitate to pass this resolution, with changes required by a new epoch and new conditions of oppression of the Negro people.

The Socialist and Communist doctrines current among the workers of Europe at the time were reflected in America and found expression on the slavery question. Frederick Douglass, a leading Negro abolitionist, complained that the efforts of the "Communists" to broaden the struggle would make "anti-slavery still more unpopular by identifying it with Communism (a complaint perhaps justified at the time—in the 1840's—in view of the fact that a number of the "Communists," did not recognize the immediacy of the struggle against slavery and would "postpone" that struggle until wage-slavery had been abolished; nevertheless, herein lies the germ of present-day Negro reformism which carries the same argument over into the period of imperialism and proletarian revolution). In his memoirs, Douglass tells of how John A. Collins who "had recently returned from England full of Communistic ideas, which ideas would do away with individual property," spoke at an anti-slavery conven-

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* George E. McNeil, *The Labor Movement*, p. 107.

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tion in Syracuse, N. Y., in 1843, and "proposed to adjourn our anti-slavery discussion and take up the subject of Communism." "To this," says Douglass, "I ventured to object."* This incident throws a penetrating light upon the still immature, but clear, conflict in class positions.

Nor must we forget the part played by a large number of the German immigrant workers who were pioneers of Marxism in this country. Organizations like the *Arbeiterbund,* led by Joseph Weydemeyer who was a close friend of Karl Marx, took an unequivocal position against slavery, as the same time keeping uppermost the class aims of the workers which, they realized, were for the moment bound up with the successful realization of the bourgeois revolution.

When the conflict was transferred from the arena of politics to the battlefield the organized workers were the ones who became practical abolitionists, with weapons in hand.

At the outbreak and during the first year of the war the organized labor movement was extremely weak and almost non-existent due to its inability to recover entirely from the onslaught of the crisis of 1857 and to the general collapse of industry which reflected the state of apoplexy of the Northern bourgeoisie when faced with the "inevitable conflict." The working class, despite the relative lateness of the second stage in the bourgeois revolution, was still too weak in numbers, not yet located strategically enough in capitalist economy, and too immature politically to have left the imprint of its own class position clearly and unequivocally on the course of events. In general, it followed in the wake of the bourgeoisie and supported it in the struggle against the slave power, without at the same time, however, entering the struggle as a class on its own account or with as much consciousness of its own aims as had been the case in the bourgeois revolutions in Europe in the 19th century. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that while the urban petty-bourgeoisie during the European revolutions of 1848-51, although vacillating during the most critical periods as is its nature, still was a source of mass support to the revolution, the Northern urban petty-bourgeoisie was the main ally in the North of the Bourbon power both in the political struggle preceding the war and during the war itself. Thus the bourgeoisie found its main support in the revolutionary struggle in the working class, the pioneer farmers of the Northwest and the Negro people.

But this is no reason for overlooking the rôle played by the working class in summing up the revolutionary traditions of the period. On the contrary, it becomes more imperative for a present-day revolu-

* *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass,* written by himself, p. 231.

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tionist to sift out of this temporary alliance of the classes the specific part played by the proletariat and bring to light both the force imparted by it to the revolution and the class conflicts which were bound to and did arise during the bourgeois revolution. To fail to do so would be to submerge completely the identity of the proletariat as a class, even though that identity may have been momentarily blurred—only blurred, not destroyed—by the demands of history.

Among certain backward sections of the workers (principally in such trading and banking centers as New York and Boston where the influence of the slavocracy and its petty-bourgeois allies was strong) the war was not received with great enthusiasm. If one recalls the vacillations of the bourgeoisie itself, its hesitancy in the face of its own revolution from which it had everything to gain, its inadequacy in finding means with which to carry on the war, its stammering utterance of only a half revolutionary slogan ("Save the Union")—then the quick response of the organized workers appears in its full historic importance. Especially so since these workers were aware of what seemed to them the more immediate struggle against wage-slavery and were *not* generally aware of the primacy of the struggle against chattel slavery. At the first call for men—while the petty-bourgeoisie remained trembling in its parlor—whole unions enlisted in a body. Both the subordination of the working class to the needs of the bourgeois revolution and the decisiveness with which it rose to the historic task are expressed in this cryptic sentence in the minutes of a Philadelphia trade union:

> "It having been resolved to enlist with Uncle Sam for the war, this union stands adjourned until either the Union is safe or we are whipped."*

The bourgeois revolution itself gave birth to revolutionary energy among the masses in proportion to the decisiveness of the struggle and the consciousness of its aims. The value to the working class of democrats like Stevens, Wendell Phillips and some of the abolitionist leaders was precisely that they educated the masses in the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, drew wider masses of them into conscious political activity and thus helped to release the energy of the masses that was to be utilized very shortly in battles between the erstwhile allies.

The war itself sharpened the class struggle within the bourgeois democracy and created the forces for the violent disruption of the union of the classes. The fortunes made from war contracts, the consolidation of industry and its growth to meet the needs of war,

* T. V. Powderly, *Thirty Years of Labor*, p. 57.

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the concentration of wealth, strengthened the power of the bourgeoisie. As a result of this process of economic entrenchment during the war, the industrial bourgeoisie was able finally to wrest control of the federal government from the philistines enthroned in Washington and to buttress its economic ascendency by the utilization of the state power for its own class needs in time to dictate the terms of submission to the South. But in the same proportion, the labor movement gathered strength and in the revolutionary milieu was able quickly to reorganize its old trade unions, build new ones and even during the war enter into direct conflict with the bourgeoisie. Toward the closing days of the war the working class had a bitter foretaste of bourgeois reaction when federal troops were used against strikers in New York. But the working class was steeling itself for the great battles of 1875-1894 which in their mass character and militancy approached insurrection.

It was the recognition of these class forces and of their direction which caused Marx to write Engels (September 10, 1862): "It is quite possible that things may come to a kind of revolution in the North beforehand."* Marx is purposely vague in his choice of words. He says "kind of revolution" because he realized full well the weakness and immaturity of the American working class. But that he did not underestimate the *pushing* character of working class participation in the bourgeois revolution (which the "Marxist" Herberg ignores) is shown by his remark to Engels (August 7, 1862) that "if Lincoln does not give in [to the demand for an energetic prosecution of the war] (which he will do, however), there will be a revolution."*

Nor, in gathering in the revolutionary traditions of the proletariat from this period, can we overlook the heroic and unprecedented action of the working class in England in preventing the British ruling class from declaring war against the North. Textile workers in Manchester, starving because the mills had been shut down by a lack of cotton caused by the war across the Atlantic, as well as workers in London, demonstrated in thousands in solidarity with the North. Karl Marx, at that time in London, played an important part in organizing the protest against the threatened war, and his articles appearing in the European press contributed towards mobilizing sympathy for the North. "It was not the wisdom of the ruling classes," says the Inaugural Address of the International Workingmen's Association, "but the heroic resistance to their criminal folly by the working classes of England that saved the West of Europe

* *Briefwechsel,* Band 3, p. 102.

* *Ibid.,* p. 92.

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from plunging headlong into an infamous crusade for the perpetuation and propagation of slavery on the other side of the Atlantic."

The bond thus created with the North was shifted exclusively to the American working class when war threatened again with England in 1869. In an address to William Sylvis, one of the militant labor leaders of the time and president of the National Labor Union which had just been organized, the International called upon the working class in the United States to oppose the war plans of its ruling class. In this message of international working class solidarity the first proletarian International clearly defines the relationship of class forces resulting from the Civil War:

> " . . . The successful close of the war against slavery has indeed inaugurated a new era in the annals of the working class. In the United States itself an independent labor movement has since arisen which the old parties and the professional politicians view with distrust . . .
>
> " . . . The Civil War offered a compensation in the liberation of the slaves and *the impulse which it thereby gave to your own class movement.*" . . . (Italics mine, J.S.A.).

After this clear summation of the import of the Civil War to the working class, the Address, with the same clarity and precision, lays bare the perspective:

> *" . . . Yours, then is the glorious task of seeing to it that at last the working class shall enter upon the scene of history, no longer as a servile following, but as an independent power,* as a power imbued with a sense of its responsibility and capable of commanding peace where their would-be masters cry war." (Italics mine, J.S.A).*

That the working class availed itself of the revolutionary energy released by the bourgeois-democratic revolution for its own class interests is shown in the tremendous upsurge of the labor movement toward the end of the war and in the period immediately following. One of its best representatives, Sylvis, in his reply to the Address of the International, showed that while the war had left him with some traces of illusion about bourgeois democracy, he was by no means oblivious to the perspective opened before the working class:

> "Our recent war," he wrote, "has led to the foundation of the most infamous money aristocracy of the earth. This money power saps the very life of the people. We have declared war against it

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* Schleuter, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

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> and we are determined to conquer—by means of the ballot, if possible—if not, we shall resort to more serious means. A little bloodletting is necessary in desperate cases."*

To him we must give credit for one of the first expressions of the principle of solidarity for Negro and white workers on the threshold of an epoch which gives that solidarity its content. In a speech delivered in 1868—1868!—before a meeting of white workers at Sunbury, Pa., he said:

> "No man in America rejoiced more than I at the downfall of Negro slavery. But when the shackles fell from the limbs of those four millions of blacks, it did not make them *free* men; it simply transferred them from one condition of slavery to another; it placed them upon the platform of the white workingman, and made all slaves together."*

This much—only an indication—for the rôle of the working class in the Civil War. But thus far we have treated only of one of the source springs of the revolutionary traditions of the proletariat inherent in this epoch. The most important revolutionary experience of reconstruction—the significant revolutionary rôle played by the Negro people—is *entirely* overlooked by "the present-day revolutionist" Herberg, who thus follows in the wake of the bourgeois slanderers of the Negro people. This is the subject of the next article.

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* Ibid., p. 234.

* *Life, Speeches, Labors and Essays of Wm. H. Sylvis*, p. 232.

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Situation in the Philippines and Tasks of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands

By S. CARPIO

MORE than one year has now passed since the formation of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands. This has been a year of concentrated historical events and development throughout the world. The world economic crisis of capitalism, unprecedented in duration and intensity, is entering upon its fourth year, working havoc with the productive forces of the capitalist world, sowing destruction, devastation, poverty, unemployment, pauperism and starvation, along its path. And, while the period of relative stabilization of world capitalism has come to an end, the economic and cultural growth and development of the U.S.S.R. is making such rapid progress that even the worst enemies of the First Workers' Republic are compelled to admit it as a fact. But, while the world economic crisis is becoming ever more acute, and as the revolutionary upsurge of the toiling masses is growing, the contradictions between the imperialist powers are becoming ever sharper (tariff wars, occupation of Manchuria by Japanese imperialism, conflict between Japan and U.S.A., between U.S.A. and Britain, and race in armaments, etc.), and the preparations of a war against the U.S.S.R. are being carried on by the imperialist powers more feverishly than ever.

The effects of the world economic crisis were felt extremely by the toiling masses of the Philippines, as may be seen from the lowering of their standard of living, the worsening of the already terrible conditions of the poor peasants who are being driven off the land by the native and imperialist land-grabbers, and exploited by combined feudal and modern imperialist methods; the growing mass unemployment, the general capitalist offensive against the revolutionary

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* The reader is also referred to other articles on the Philippines in *The Communist* for July, 1932 and March and August, 1931.

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trade union and political organizations of the Philippine workers and peasants.

THE RADICALIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINE TOILING MASSES

We have been the witnesses of a definite *radicalization of the toiling masses in the Philippine Islands.* During the past year there there were serious mass movements of a definitely revolutionary character among the peasants (*armed peasant rebellions* for land and independence, and struggles of the poor peasantry and agricultural laborers in Pangasinan, Bataan, Bulacan, Neuva Ecija, Pampanga, etc.). It is characteristic of the extent and depth of the peasants' movement that the native capitalist and landlord press, as well as the American imperialist press, which until quite recently was in the habit of characterizing all peasants' rebellions and mass movements as "mere fanatic-religious bands," aroused and led by "Bolsheviks," this time are compelled to admit more or less truthfully and soberly the true causes of the peasants' rebellions and movements, and to reveal to some extent at least the terrible conditions of exploitation, usury, land-grabbing and mass pauperization to which the poor peasants are subjected. Even the official organ of American imperialism in the Philippine Islands—the *American Chamber of Commerce Journal,* finds it necessary to give publicity to the recent peasants' movements in the provinces of Bulakan, Nueva Ecija and Pampanga, where the so-called "Tangulan" movement against the terrible usury and "pasuned" practice, compelled the landlords of these regions to make some "concessions" in the planting, harvesting, marketing, and general tenantry terms. The seriousness and extent of the peasant movement of recent months may further be judged from the fact that, under the auspices of the Bureau of Labor, a group of reformist trade union leaders of the Congress Obrero and of the Oriental Labor Union (Messrs. Domingo Ponce, Hugo Ritaga and others (are being sent out to the central provinces of Luzon, where the agrarian movement is most serious, in order "to promote good-will among the tenants and landowners," and "to lessen as much as possible the labor troubles arising from the widespread discontent among the farmers and factory workers in the provinces" . . . (*Philippine Herald,* August 3, 1932).

During this period, since the foundation of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands, there were also serious *strike struggles* and mass movements by the proletariat of the Philippine Islands (transport workers in Iloilo, occidental and oriental Negroes, Cebu and Manila, railway workers in Iloilo, oil and tobacco workers in Manila, etc.). More recently there was the Malaban sugar factory strike, the Mag-

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dalena cigar factory strike, the La Helena strike, the La Yabana cigar workers' strike, the Nueva Ecija autobus strike, etc.

This was also a period of intensification and further development of the *national independence movement,* in which all the bourgeois and landlord national-reformist parties and organizations revealed themselves more clearly than ever as agents and allies of American imperialism, who most of all fear the revolutionary upsurge of the proletarian and peasant masses, and who are interested directly and immediately in the getting of as large a share as the imperialist masters of the country will permit them from the profits and surplus profits derived from the combined feudal and modern plantation and imperialist methods of exploitation of the peasant masses and the working class.

The past year has brought with it further concrete developments in this field. Everything that has happened only serves to clarify and emphasize the following points:

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

1. American imperialism is preparing for the war which it considers inevitable against Japanese imperialism in the Pacific (recent developments in Manchuria and China generally have accelerated war preparations in the Pacific, and, as a matter of fact, Japan has been and is today carrying on a war of conquest in Northern China and Manchuria and thus preparing its imperialist attack against the Soviet Union).

2. American imperialism will under no circumstances give up the Philippines, its most important military and naval base in the Pacific. American imperialism may, and is compelled to, manouvre in relation to the national independence movement, with various vague promises and intimations of "autonomy" and the like, especially now—when the perspective of war with Japan is drawing ever nearer.

3. The Filipino landlord and bourgeois classes have already openly capitulated and have officially given up their demand for independence; they now speak only of "autonomy"—in full accord with the dictates of American imperialism. This open treachery of the national-reformist parties and leaders now serves as a springboard for various demagogic "left" national reformist leaders whose aim it is to put up a dam against the radicalization of the masses,—in the form of such organizations as the *Civic Union* (which pretends to be criticizing Quezon and Osmena and Roxas for their treachery to the independence movement).

In the absence of a strong, well-organized Communist Party, well-

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rooted among the masses of workers and peasants and carrying on a consistent and systematic struggle against all forms and shades of national reformism, such organizations as the Civic Union may, for a longer or shorter period, *depending upon our strength and activities,* succeed in paralyzing the spontaneous mass movement for independence and in holding back the anti-imperialist movement from further radicalization and revolutionary forms. From this arise definite concrete tasks for the Communist Party, Philippine Islands.

Actual facts and events of the past year glaringly illustrate and confirm this analysis: War Secretary Hurley's 1931 visit to the Philippine Islands and his special report to Hoover, after which Hoover declared that "the time has not yet come for the independence of the Philippine Islands." The agitation for "independence" or "autonomy" by certain sugar and oil interests in the U.S.A. who are interested merely in putting up tariff walls against Philippine exports into the U.S.A. has, of course, been gladly taken advantage of by the national reformist leaders in order to bring about *any sort* of "compromise" that would help them camouflage their treachery. Both the *Hare Bill* which was approved by Congress, and the *Hawes-Cutting Bill* which was adopted by the Senate Committee, make the vaguest of suggestions of "autonomy" after a certain period (eight to fifteen or more years), in the meanwhile securing for the American sugar and other interests what they wanted (the restriction of Philippine exports).

But what is most important is the provision of both the House and Senate Bills that the U.S.A. *retains sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and the "right to retain and maintain its military and naval bases in the Philippine Islands after independence is granted."* Such is the "independence" American imperialism is manoeuvring with in the face of growing radicalization of the anti-imperialist and agrarian movements in the Philippine Islands on the one hand, and in the face of the approaching war against Japan on the other. And it is such "independence" and "autonomy" which the official leaders of national reformist parties and organizations are giving their blessing and approval.

THE NATIONAL REFORMERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

No wonder then, that for fear of their political positions at home, and of the radicalization of the independence movement among the masses, a certain section of the national reformist front, following the example of *"left" national reformists* in other colonial countries, are trying to capitalize the situation with unheard-of demagogy, and

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even with threats of "general strike" and "boycott." In the manifesto of the latest national reformist creation, the so-called Civic Union, we read the complaint that the "The Filipinos were terribly disillusioned by the inexplicable conduct of the constitutional leader of the Filipino people, the Hon. Manuel L. Quezon, who on his own responsibility . . . submitted to the American authorities . . . the question of autonomy, in contravention of the express instructions which he received from the Philippine Legislature, as head of the Legislative Mission" . . . The Civic Union therefore goes on to threaten, to serve "as an instrument of our people in an economic boycott, general strike or civil disobedience—without violence and within the bounds of law and order." . . .

The Civic Union frankly declare themselves followers of Mahatma Gandhi, and of his methods of non-violence, *i.e.,* of the Indian national reformist method of betrayal of the independence of the Indian cause.

Less than two years ago a similar step was taken by the national reformist leaders, when the *Ang Bagong Katipunan* was launched with Roxas as its head. Now the Ang Bagong Katipunan is dead. Roxas approves of Hoover's schemes of "autonomy," and the rôle of "Left" national reformism is now taken over by such old hands at the game as *Gabaldon, Sandko, General Aguinaldo & Co.* Only this time, developments have entered a higher phase, because the open treachery of the official leaders of the nationalist movement and of the politicians threatens to raise a new wave of discontent and radicalization among large sections of the workers and peasants, and among the petty-bourgeois intellectual circles.

The proposal of some of the Democrata leaders to organize a *Labor Party* in place of the now defunct Democrata Party; the launching of the so-called *Catholic Workers' Federation,* which is nothing but an attempt by American imperialism and the native exploiters and the Catholic church to capitalize the present situation for splitting the labor and national independence movement still further and of diverting it to non-radical counter-revolutionary channels; these and other facts, such as the incident with the open series of radical pro-Communist articles in the *Collegian* (student organ of the Philippine University),—indicate the internal dislocations that are taking place among the masses, and the reaction of American imperialism and the native bourgeoisie to these events.

Such are the *objective* conditions, national and international, in which the Communist Party, Philippine Islands has to work, and which determine the basis, the forms and content of the tasks and tactics of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands. The gen-

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eral tasks, both political and organizational, and the general tactics of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands during the present period, were dealt with in detail in various Party documents (of the First Party Congress, etc.) and there is therefore no need of repeating them here. However, judging by reports and communications from the Philippine Islands, we are under the impression that the Communist Party, Philippine Islands *has not been able to use to full advantage the extremely favorable objective conditions for its activities,* for the purpose of mobilizing, organizing and leading the revolutionary forces of the Philippine Islands, and of entrenching the Communist Party, Philippine Islands among the masses. We realize, of course, the great obstacles and real difficulties created by the imperialist and native government organs, judiciary and police, which hampered the Communist Party, Philippine Islands in its work by means of white terror, persecutions and banishments. However, difficulties of this nature are there precisely for us to overcome, for we know of no really revolutionary movement and of no Bolshevik Party which has grown and developed without difficulties.

In one of the letters received from the Philippine comrades after the first wave of persecution, we read:

> "At the beginning we were at a loss, and knew not what to do to cope with the situation . . . Many of our comrades got scared and began to adopt a passive attitude . . . Under the circumstances we adopted the policy of legalism in order to fight within the law and inside the capitalist courts." . . .

THE FREEING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY FROM NATIONAL REFORMIST INFLUENCES

It should be noted that even before the high wave of white terror, before and during the First Congress of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands, the serious attention of the Philippine comrades was called to the probable wave of persecution and to the organizational measures and methods of work necessary to adopt in order to establish the Communist Party, Philippine Islands securely in the shops, factories, plantations, in the city and country. Subsequent events seem to indicate, however, that after the first blow dealt at the Communist Party by the capitalist and imperialist police and courts, the Communist Party, Philippine Islands, as a Party, as the only revolutionary political Party of the working class, the Party which declared itself to be the mobilizer, organizer and leader of the struggles of the workers and peasants went underground, and so deeply underground that it could not be said to have functioned as a Communist Party at all. For instance, what was done by the

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Communist Party, Philippine Islands to mobilize the masses in defense of the Communist Party and its rights to legal existence, after the Party was outlawed and the votes it received in last year's elections declared nil? The Communist Party received about 50,000 votes which were not legally recognized. At that time the Party counted nearly two thousand members, and yet, the Communist Party, Philippine Islands has failed to use this circumstance to develop a real mass campaign in defense of the Communist Party and of the revolutionary trade union and peasant organizations. In another document, the comrades of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands attribute our weaknesses to the . . . *"Deep rooted fear characteristic of the colonial enslaved and oppressed masses"* . . . (!!!) This is not true. Not only the workers and peasants of China and India but the workers and peasants of the Philippine Islands who have carried on two wars against Spanish and American imperialism and who have carried on serious struggles against the native cacique and usurer (see the peasant uprisings) and against the foreign imperialist exploiter and oppressor, have demonstrated before the whole world that their "characteristic" *is not* "deep-rooted fear," but that *whenever and wherever we succeed in freeing them from the ideological influence of imperialism and national reformism, wherever the Communist Party organizes and leads their struggles, they follow our lead and fight heroically.*

The Party membership at present is between 500 and 600, with about 130 local nuclei, with no provincial committees yet functioning. This tends to show that our comrades in the Philippine Islands were unable to secure organizationally the political influence we had in the early months of the Party's existence, and even to retain the membership we then had (about 1,500). We also notice that although the first Central Committee meeting dealt with most of the political and organization problems confronting the Party (for certain critical remarks on the resolutions adopted by that Central Committee Plenum—see below), there were no reports on the work and activities of the various nuclei or local Party organizations. In the future it will be necessary for the Central Commtitee and Political Bureau to receive and hear regular and systematic reports from the local units and most important nuclei, to check this work, to give concrete leadership and make proposals for improving their work.

A most positive feature and achievement in the work of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands, is the opening of a *workers school* with over 160 enrolled students. It will be necessary to concentrate at first on a few of the more essential subjects, since, as the comrades themselves complain, they suffer from a lack of cadres. One

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of the first courses to be organized is: The Program of the Communist International, the Program of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands and the decisions and resolutions of its First Congress. Other subjects of central and immediate importance are: the struggle against imperialism and imperialist war; the struggle for national independence and against national reformism; problems of the agrarian revolution in the Philippine Islands, and the revolutionary alliance of the proletariat and peasantry in the struggle against imperialism, capitalism and feudalism; tasks of the revolutionary trade unions of the Philippine Islands; Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. and defense of the Soviet Union against threatening intervention by the imperialists.

Titis, the central organ of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands which played such a tremendous role in the early organizational period of the Communist Party, and which was suspended for technical reasons and because of persecution, is not yet republished. This is a most serious setback. No effort should be spared to continue the publication of *Titis.* The experience of the Russian Revolution, of the Chinese Communist Party and of our revolutionary movement in all countries with an illegal movement, has shown that the publication and maintenance regularly of the central organ of the Party is of the greatest importance, not only as an agitational, but as an organizational center, around which the Communist Party gathers all revolutionary elements, members and sympathizers. It is to be urged again and again to concentrate all efforts on the republication of *Titis.*

Regarding the resolutions and decisions adopted by the First Plenum of the Central Committee, it is necessary to call the serious attention of the Party to the following important points:

The main general defect of the resolutions as a whole is that these resolutions are still too general, too abstract, too little concretized to Philippine needs and immediate tasks.

In the general political resolution adopted by the First Central Committee Plenum there are formulations such as these:

> "*The peasants* are becoming strong competitors of the town and factory workers . . . The peasants become the *hopeless rivals of the industrial workers,*" etc.

THE REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS

It is absolutely wrong and politically dangerous to characterize the impoverished peasants as "rivals" of the industrial workers. They are the victims of the most inhuman exploitation at the hands of native landlords, usurers, feudal barons, church estates on the one

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hand, and of imperialist land-grabbing, pauperization and plantation slavery on the other. It is precisely the argument that the worker is the "rival of the peasant"—that is being used in every colonial and semi-colonial country for the purpose of putting up a Chinese wall between the peasant masses and the proletariat and to prevent the revolutionary proletariat from organizing and giving ideological political leadership to the poor peasantry and agricultural laborers, who constitute our class ally without whom the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution is unthinkable. It is therefore extremely strange to read in the resolutions of the Communist Party that the "peasants become the hopeless rivals of the industrial workers." *Not rivalry is the main element in the relation between these two classes, but the revolutionary alliance of the workers and peasants, under the leadership of the proletariat and its vanguard, the Communist Party—in the struggle against imperialism, capitalism and the remnants of feudalism.*

In the resolution on the national independence movement, one of the immediate slogans put forward by the Party reads:

> *" . . .The most important of all is the immediate organization of local Soviets in every town and rural district."*

This fact indicates that there seems to be no clarity in the minds of even our leading comrades as to the true significance and content of the slogan "Immediate organization of Soviets" and of the term "Soviet" as such.

In the first stages of the revolution, in the concrete circumstances of the Philippine Islands, Soviets will be the organs of power of the proletariat and peasantry, with the perspective of being transformed into organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the process of the growth of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the Socialist revolution.

This means that *in order to establish Soviets, the proletariat and peasantry, under the leadership of the Communist Party, must carry on a struggle for power,* in other words, it means that *Soviets can only arise out of revolutionary situations, that Soviets are created in the process of the revolutionary battles of the workers and peasants for political power.*

Our Philippine comrades realize of course, that to put up such a slogan for the "immediate organization of Soviets" at a time when the Communist Party has until now extremely little contact with the peasant movements in the most important rural districts, when our revolutionary trade unions can hardly be said to have rooted themselves among the real proletarian masses in the shops, factories, transport enterprises, plantations, etc., when the Communist Party,

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Philippine Islands has not yet succeeded in securing a sound footing, and when both the objective and subjective conditions in the Philippine Islands are not yet ripe for it,—means simply to play with the slogan of establishing Soviets.

The idea of Soviets as organs of power of the workers and peasants themselves, must of course be explained and popularized, on the basis of the Russian and Chinese experiences. But while popularizing and explaining the slogan of Soviets, we must prepare the ground; *but preparing the ground means to organize and lead the immediate, concrete daily struggles of the workers and peasants, for their immediate and direct demands* (regarding rent, land, usury, debts, working hours, wages, unemployment, living standard, etc., etc.). Only such work of organization and leadership of the daily economic and political struggles of the workers and peasants, will make it possible for the Communist Party, Philippine Islands to raise the ideological and political level of these struggles and *to combine the daily economic struggles with the general class struggles of the masses* against imperialism, and against native landlordism and capitalism. This is lacking in the resolutions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands.

FOR A LENINIST UNDERSTANDING ON THE WAR QUESTION

In the resolution dealing with the Manchurian situation, we find such a phrase as *"all wars are imperialist wars."* This is wrong, and only plays into the hands of bourgeois pacificism and even imperialism. *Not all wars are imperialist wars. The wars carried on by the workers and peasants against imperialism, for independence, against feudal and capitalist exploitation, are not imperialist wars.* The revolutionary wars for national independence by the Chinese, Indian, Philippine, Korean, Turkish and other oppressed peoples are not imperialist wars; they are anti-imperialist, and therefore are to be supported by the toiling masses of all countries. The war of the Chinese Soviets against the native militarist and feudal barons and against the imperialists, is a *revolutionary war* and is therefore supported by the international revolutionary movement. The war of the U.S.S.R. against the imperialist interventionists and in defense of the Soviets of the First Workers' Republic, is also a revolutionary war in the interests of the international proletariat. Hence, it is wrong to pronounce "all wars—imperialist wars."

In the document addressed by the newly formed National Unemployed Committee to the Governor-General, we note first of all, that every time the danger of a new imperialist war is mentioned there is a *definite tendency to speak only of Japanese imperialism*

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(See point 7: "We protest against imperialist wars and possible imperialist intervention against the Soviet Union which is now being brewed by Japanese imperialism"). *It is both wrong and dangerous to create any illusions among the Philippine masses that American imperialism is playing any less active rôle in the preparation of war and intervention against the U.S.S.R., than Japan, or Britain, or France.* That would only be playing into the hands of the American imperialists and of the enemies of Philippine independence, who use the argument of "Japanese danger" for their own imperialist purposes. The war started by Japanese imperialism in Manchuria and Northern China, the attitude and tactics adopted by American imperialism from the very outbreak of this war, and the policy pursued by the League of Nations, particularly by French and British imperialism, revealed clearly that Japanese imperialism started its Manchurian war with the full knowledge and approval of French and British imperialism, and that the American imperialists were doing their utmost to provoke a war between Japan and the U.S.S.R. The virtual conquest of Manchuria by Japan means that Japanese imperialism has made the first step for its attack on the Soviet Union (see the now famous Tanaka Memorandum* where these plans are outlined in detail). The conquest of Manchuria by Japan, and the attitude adopted by the rest of the imperialist powers (U.S.A. included) means that the U.S.S.R. is in immediate danger of imperialist intervention.

In the same document of the National Unemployment Committee we find such a demand:

> "If the government of the Philippine Islands is unable to provide work or adequate relief for its thousands of unemployed, we demand that those unemployed who wish to work and live peacefully and comfortably under the aid and protection of the workers' and peasants' Soviet state, should be given at least free passports and transportation to the Soviet Union."

We are of the opinion that such a demand, formulated the way it is, is not correct politically. It is of course very important to popularize the achievements of the Russian proletariat and the great unparalleled improvements in the condition of the Russian toiling masses, due to the revolution and to the great Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. But it is wrong to *divert* the attention of the unemployed masses in the Philippine Islands from the necessity of fighting *right there and then,* jointly with the rest of the working class,

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* See pamphlet *Japanese Imperialism Stripped.* Workers Library Publishers. 5c.

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against misery and poverty, against capitalism and imperialism, and for concrete demands for relief, for work or wages, unemployment insurance, etc., etc.

FOR A CORRECT TRADE UNION POLICY

These are only some of the more important points in the resolutions to which we thought it necessary to call the attention of our Philippine comrades.

In regard to the *trade union movement*: In one of the recent reports on the trade union movement, our Philippine comrades report on the mass meeting organized by K.A.P. in the early part of the year. About this event the comrades write that "it was the first open meeting since last year's Congress." Does this mean that for *nearly one whole year, i.e.,* since last year's K.A.P. Congresses, there were no mass meetings held by our trade unions? Is it possible that the K.A.P. was not functioning all this while? What were the local organizations and the various trade and industrial sections of the K.A.P., (our Trade Union Federation) doing? What concretely, were the tobacco workers, printers' and transport workers' union affiliated with K.A.P. doing during this past year. It is extremely difficult to suppose or imagine that none of these unions of K.A.P. were functioning during this year, or that no membership or mass meetings had been organized during this period. If this was K.A.P.'s *first* mass meeting in a year, how then could the K.A.P. Annual Congress (which was also to have taken place in May or June) have been properly prepared and organized? From the latest information at hand, we learn that during the past six months K.A.P. has succeeded in organizing several unions, such as the Cocoanut Oil Workers', Auto Drivers' and Construction Workers'; also that 500 women workers have been organized. It is necessary to report in detail about these organizations, their strength, their activities, their leadership, etc. In what unions are the women workers organized? It is very important to study in detail the strike movement; for example: the Malaban sugar factory strike, the Magdalena cigar factory strike, the La Helena and La Yabana strikes, etc. K.A.P.'s central organ has not yet been republished, which fact greatly hampers our trade union work. Another question of importance: The *Philippine Herald* reported that among the labor leaders sent out into the provinces to pacify the rebellious tenants in Neuva Ecija, Bulacan, Panpanga and Pangasinan, there are certain leaders from the Oriental Labor Union which, as we believe, is still affiliated to the K.A.P. If this is true, what is the attitude adopted by K.A.P. on this matter? Failure to react on such a matter would mean that

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K.A.P. and the Party will be discredited among the revolutionary peasantry and among the workers.

While the Party and trade union organizations are, despite the white terror and persecutions, showing signs of life and activity with at least their central executive organs making some attempts to rally the masses and to lead their struggles, the condition of the *Peasants' Confederation* seems to be extremely bad, with very little effort to improve it. In a country like the Philippine Islands, where the anti-imperialist, agrarian revolution under the leadership of the working class is the central problem of the movement, and where, during the past two years we have been the witnesses of every serious peasant movements (armed revolts for land and independence), it would be nothing short of criminal for us to neglect the peasants' movement. And yet, according to report from the Philippine Islands, the Peasants' Confederation seems to be extremely inactive and out of touch with the peasant masses, especially so during the past year, since the break-up of the Sixth Congress of the National Confederation of Peasants. We are of the opinion that it is not a matter that concerns any one single comrade alone; the work of the National Confederation of Peasants and among the peasant masses is a most urgent and serious matter for the Communist Party (see resolutions of the First Congress of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands). Why has the Executive of the National Confederation of Peasants not been convened during the past year? Why has our program of peasants' demands and program of action not been circularized and popularized among the peasant masses? The recent tenants' movement in Candaba (Pampanga) and the struggle of the peasants for the return of their receipts, seem to have had absolutely no contact and no leadership whatever from our National Confederation of Peasants. The Colorum movement, the Tangulan movement, and nearly all other peasant movements of the past two years were not only spontaneous movements that arose, took place and were ended without the least initiative or leadership on our part, but even after these movements abated or were crushed, neither the National Confederation of Peasants nor the Party seem to have undertaken anything to establish contact with the peasant masses, to acquaint them with our program and demands, etc. Quite recently there have been written and published by leading comrades of the National Confederation of Peasants four pamphlets (two on the history of the secrets and mysteries of the Roman Catholic Church). We agree that it is a very good thing to write and publish pamphlets on these and similar subjects, but it would have been very timely to publish at least one pamphlet

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on the peasants' question and the demands and tasks of the revolutionary peasants' movement.

* * *

THE CENTRAL TASKS

The *central immediate tasks* that arise before the Party of the Philippine Islands at the present juncture and in the face of the objective and subjective conditions considered above are as follows:

1. *To consolidate and build up the Party.* To entrench the Party nuclei in the shops, factories, transport enterprises, arsenals, plantations and in the villages. The content of the work of the Party-nuclei is to be based on the *daily, immediate, economic and political needs and demands of the workers in the given enterprise, trade or industry, and on* the popularization of the Party's policies and activities among the workers of the given enterprise.

The form of activity of the Party and its nuclei is, under the present circumstances, to be a combination of legal and illegal methods of work: the Communist nuclei in the enterprises are to be secret, their meetings illegal, the names of the members of the Party in the given enterprises not to be published or revealed; but this illegal form of nuclus work is to be combined with the most active, open and energetic mass activities in the given enterprises, the initiative always to be with the Party nucleus which, under the direction of the higher and central Party organs are to initiate, organize and lead the movements and struggles of the workers, to gather around them the best and most active elements from among the organized and unorganized workers of the given enterprises, to take the initiative in activizing the work of the revolutionary union in the given enterprise (wherever K.A.P.'s organizations already have a footing in the given shop or factory) or to recruit new members for our trade unions.

Furthermore, the central organ of the Communist Party, Philippine Islands must under all circumstances be revived and regularly published. If there is no possibility of republishing the *Titis* openly and legally in its previous form, it is urgently necessary to revive it in illegal form, printing it and circulating it secretly in any form or size possible under the circumstances (mimeographed or printed). But in any case the Party paper must be transformed into a real mass organ (the example of the Chinese Party which has to work under the most terrible conditions of white terror shows that this is possible). An attempt should be made to form district or provincial committees with the best and most tried and tested comrades at their head,—in at least the most important industrial and agrarian districts, so that

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the work of the Pary as a whole should be decentralized. The fractions must at last start functioning in the trade unions, peasants' unions, M.O.P.R., and other mass organizations. The Y.C.L., the M.O.P.R., the Defense League, the Anti-Imperialist League, must be built up into real mass organizations

The Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International which took place recently, and whose resolutions and decisions have already been published,* has laid particular emphasis on the following tasks confronting all Communist Parties: Concretization of the struggle (meaning that the Communist Parties must operate not only with general political slogans, but with concrete slogans and demands actually relating to the given daily economic struggle of the workers and peasants as a basis for developing these struggles into political mass movements); to lead the struggle against the capitalist offensive, against reaction and fascism; to lead the struggle against the approaching imperialist war and intervention against the Soviet Union.

2. *To fight and expose national reformism in all its forms.* Here again, not mere general epithets, denunciations, slogans and phrases, but concrete, serious analysis and differentiation of the various currents and counter-currents in the national reformist movement, reacting to every new event and development, to every new and higher phase of development in this field, and explaining understandably and on the basis of fact the true meaning of the often clever and refined demagogy which so often succeeds in fooling and misleading the workers and peasants. A very glaring example for the Philippines is the course of development, the birth, first stages of "progress" and "popularity," and quiet and infamous death of the Ang Bagong Katipunang and now the birth of the Civic Union, which should not be considered merely as a simple repetition of the A.B.K. and nothing more, but as the result of certain events that took place during the past year on lines indicated above.

The Communist Party, Philippine Islands must therefore expose concretely the true class composition of the various national reformist organizations, the leaders of these bodies, their past and present treachery and demagogy, opposing to all this our own positive and concrete program and demands. The students' movement, the Anti-Imperialist League should be utilized for this work and for winning over large numbers of sympathizers and fighters whom we cannot otherwise reach. The experience of the Chinese and Indian, Korean and Indonesian revolutionary movements and the

* See pamphlet *Capitalist Stabilization Has Ended.* Workers Library Publishers. 10c.

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treachery of national reformism in these countries should be utilized in our agitation and propaganda.

3. *In the struggle against imperialist war and the threatening intervention against the Soviet Union,* the recently held Plenum of the E.C.C.I. lays special emphasis on the following: To carry on a systematic ideological struggle against chauvinism and bourgeois nationalism and against all militaristic measures adopted by the bourgeoisie in preparation of the coming war; to react immediately and actively on all anti-Soviet campaigns, (as for example the recent campaign of lies in the American imperialist and other press in the Philippine Islands; to use united front tactics from below (with the masses of workers and peasants, whether organized in our peasant or trade union organizations, or altogether unorganized as yet); and as a special task for the Communist Party of the U.S.A. (which in the given case also directly concerns the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands)—to expose the bigotry and falsehood of the Wilsonian phraseology of American imperialism (such as the "Disarmament" proposals of Hoover, the phrases about defending the sovereignty of China, etc., etc.), but which in reality is leaving nothing undone to provoke a war of Japan against China and the U.S.S.R.

4. In regard to the revolutionary *trade unions and our Peasants' Confederations,* the general tasks have already been pointed out in previous Party documents and resolutions. Here again we wish to call the attention of our Philippine comrades to the resolutions and decisions of the recent Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., which more than ever emphasize the need of leading partial struggles of the proletariat, on the basis of the most immediate, even the smallest daily needs and demands of the workers and peasants, and to strive to gain control and leadership of the spontaneous movements against the capitalist offensive (the past two years in the Philippine Islands were rich with spontaneous struggles of the workers and peasants on a grand scale). The fighting capacity of the masses will thus increase on the basis of their own experience, and thus it will be possible to raise their struggles to a higher level of general political and general class tasks. The unemployed movement must also be organized under our leadership to carry on the struggle for partial, concrete, immediate demands, on the basis of the united front of the unemployed with those still employed.

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How Many Unemployed?

A REVIEW OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMIC CRISIS AS OF NOVEMBER, 1932

By JOHN IRVING

(Continued)

IN the November issue of *The Communist* we showed that in the principal industries of the United States the fully unemployed number upward of 13,000,000 as of last July. Specifically, there were unemployed in:

Manufacturing industries 6,400,000; transportation and communication, 1,639,000; coal mining-bituminous and anthracite, 308,000; trade, 1,884,000; building, 1,792,000; agriculture—farm labor, 1,138,540, a total of 13,161,540.

There remained to be considered the number of unemployed among the 1,057,904 persons who in 1930 gave their occupation as "public service"; among the 3,425,844 in "professional service"; among the 4,812,098 in "domestic and personal service"; among the 1,333,065 "unclassified"; among those engaged in "forestry and fishing," in mining, other than coal mining, and in other extractive industries; and, finally, among the 6,012,012 owners and tenant farmers and their 1,659,792 "unpaid family workers." Besides these, additions were to be made from among 1,250,000 persons who have become available for gainful occupation between April, 1930, when the Federal Census, upon which our calculations were mostly based, was taken and July, 1932, when our calculations terminate.

When all these items are included *the total number of full-time unemployed as of July,* 1932, *rises to nearly* 17,000,000.

We arrived at our unemployment figures for the manufacturing industries, it will be recalled, by derivation from the *index of employment* of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. That index is a figure representing the number of wage earners on the payrolls of manufacturing plants near the middle of any given month as a percent of the monthly average of manufacturing wage earners on the payrolls in 1926. That average, if we add the "salaried officers and employees"—about 1,300,000—amounted to 10,000,000 in round numbers. As the index of *employment* last July stood at 55.2, we took 45 as the index of *unemployment* and derived the figure 4,410,-

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000 as the number of unemployed in the manufacturing industries for that month. But as against the 10,000,000 persons on the payrolls, some 12,000,000 "persons 10 years of age and over" were available for gainful employment in manufacturing industries. This difference of 2,000,000 between the available and the actually employed may be accounted for by (1) the difference between the *average* number of workers on pay and the number that is called in during *peak* months of employment, (2) the number chronically unemployed, (3) the sick and disabled, (4) the rapidly growing number of the technologically unemployed, and (5) the inclusion (as of 1926) among those available for gainful employment in the "manufacturing" industries, of 283,000 craftsmen "not in factories." These, in 1926, were made up of some 180,000 dressmakers and seamstresses, of some 26,000 jewelers and watchmakers, and of some 77,000 shoemakers and cobblers.

In our calculations we disregarded the presence of these 283,000 craftsmen and added the entire 2,000,000 to our derived figure of unemployed, to the 4,410,000, thus obtaining the total of 6,400,000 as the number of unemployed in the "manufacturing" industries in July, 1932. Obviously that was an overstatement. Not all of the 283,000 home craftsmen could be considered as having been jobless last mid-summer—perhaps not more than the proportion found to hold true for those working *in* factories—that is, 45%. Accordingly, instead of 283,000 home craftsmen, only 127,000 should have been included among last summer's unemployed, and our total of unemployed should therefore be reduced by 156,000, that is, instead of 2,000,000, the figure to be added to our derived total of 4,410,000 becomes 1,844,000.* This is, of course, an insignificant reduction, considering the larger totals.

The previous grand total of 13,161,540 now becomes 13,105,540.

We make no change in our "transportation and communication" figures previously given, nor in that for coal mining. But we will add at this point the number of unemployed last midsummer among those engaged in the extractive industries outside of coal mining.

With the average for 1929 as 100, the Bureau of Labor Statistics

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* This would indicate that in 1926, over 15% of those customarily engaged in the manufacturing industries of the United States were without jobs. This tallies very closely with the unemployment figures obtained for the month of April, 1929, for sampling blocks in the city of Philadelphia. The "average" for all industries including agriculture (!) amounted to 10.4%. The percentages of unemployment in the two predominately industrial blocks were 18.9% and 14.8%—higher than in any of the other eight blocks covered. See Bulletin No. 520 of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Unemployment Series.

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index of employment last July stood at 29.5 for metalliferous mining, 49.5 for quarrying and non-metallic mining, and 55.4 for crude petroleum producing.

The 1930 census gives the gainfully employed in these occupations, everybody included, as 150,000 for metalliferous mining, 76,000 for quarrying, etc., and 123,000 for oil and gas well operations.

Applying the unemployment index as derived from these indexes of employment, we get, 70.5% of 150,000=105,750; 50.5% of 76,000=38,380, and 44.6% of 123,000=54,858, or a total of 199,000 as the number of unemployed in these industries last summer. And adding these to our previous total we get the new figure, 13,305,000.

Our next concern is with the computation of the number of unemployed in the occupational category "trade." The Bureau of Labor Statistics' index of employment in trade, "wholesale" and "retail," averaged for last July about 75. That meant 25% unemployment among the 7,537,026 persons, giving "trade" as their occupation, or a total of 1,884,000. But in the census figure cited are included 1,703,522 "retail dealers." Did the Bureau of Labor Statistics' employment index apply to these in the same proportion as it presumably did to the wage earners in the trade—to the bank tellers and customers' men to the salesmen and salesgirls, commercial travelers and advertising agents; insurance agents, floorwalkers, real estate solicitors, etc.? We do not know. We do know that the mortality in the retail trade is quite large even in normal times. According to studies conducted by the University of Buffalo Bureau of Business and Social Research, covering the experience of retail stores in Buffalo during the 10-year period 1918-1928, the mortality of grocery stores is 40% for the first year; that of shoe stores is 44%; of hardware stores, 34.5%, of drug stores 26.6%. For a number of smaller towns, in Illinois, for the years 1925-1930 Professor Converse found the mortality of retail stores much smaller than in the large city of Buffalo—for eleven trade groups a mortality of 16% the first year, 27% for the first two years, and 35% for the first three years. Were we too conservative in applying the figure 25% as a measure of unemployment among "retail dealers" in 1932? We do not know, and so our previously computed figure will stand.

We now turn to calculating the number of unemployed among the other categories of occupation, and first to the small field of "Forestry and Fishing." Disregarding the 73,280 "fishermen and oystermen" we find for 1930, 162,233 "lumbermen, raftsmen and woodchoppers." The *Standard Statistics'* index of employment for "lumber and products" last July stood at 19.0, with the average

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1923-25 as 100. In 1920 "lumbermen, raftsmen and wood choppers" numbered 205,315. Taking 180,000 as the average for the years 1923-25 as 100. In 1920 "lumbermen, raftsmen and woodchoppers" 1930) we find 81% of 180,000 or 146,000 as the number of unemployed workers in "lumber and products" as of last mid-summer.

And so our grand total figure rises to 13,451,000.

Next comes "public service," embracing policemen, firemen, soldiers, sailors, marines, postmasters and postmen, marshals, sheriffs, detectives and most civil service employees excepting teachers—in all, 1,057,904 persons as of April, 1930. How many of these were unemployed in July, 1932? At first blush it would seem that there had been an increase instead of a decline in this category of occupations, what with "red riots" and bonus marches, and coal strikes the need for policemen and marshals and detectives and sheriffs would become greater. But as a matter of record even the Federal unemployment census of April, 1930 reported that some 3% of those giving "public service" as their occupation were then unemployed, a matter of about 30,000 persons.

Recent figures of unemployment in this category of occupations for the country at large are not available. But in November, 1931, sample studies of unemployment were made in Buffalo (see *Monthly Labor Review*) U. S. Dept. of Labor, Feb., 1932) and in Syracuse, N. Y. (see *Monthly Labor Review*, April, 1932). According to these studies Buffalo "government employees" had a full time unemployment percentage of 13.6, and Syracuse government employees, 10.8%. That was in November, 1931. Between then and last July some further increases in these percentages must have taken place. For more and more municipalities have approached the brink of bankruptcy and have resorted to the same means of "cutting expenses" as any other business corporation, by discharging the lower salaried employes. Perhaps, "averaging" Buffalo and Syracuse, and assuming that in 1930 also a certain percentage of those "available" for "public service" in Buffalo and Syracuse were unemployed, say only 3% as given for the whole country by the Federal Census, the average for the two cities, 12%, represents therefore a 9 point increase over the eighteen months, April, 1930-November, 1931. Assume further that this increase at the rate of 1 point per two months has continued up to last July. At that time, therefore, unemployment in "public service" would have amounted to 16.5%. If, finally, we may assume that the situation in these two cities is typical of that for the country as a whole, the number of unemployed in public service last July in the country as a whole could not have amounted to less than 175,000.

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Adding this figure to our previous total we get 13,626,000.

We rely again on the Buffalo and Syracuse studies for our estimate of the number of unemployed among the 3,425,844 engaged in "professional service." Here are included the teachers (1,062,615), actors, lawyers, physicians, clergymen, musicians, consulting engineers, trained nurses, etc., etc. The Federal unemployment census counted only 3% unemployed among them. But in Buffalo and in Syracuse last November the percentages were 7.5 and 3.8 respectively.

The difficulty in arriving at a reasonably accurate estimate of the amount of unemployment in the profession lies in the evasiveness of the very concept "unemployment" as applied to these occupations. When is a physician, a lawyer, a consulting engineer "unemployed"? When he fails to get a job as a taxi driver, or an elevator runner? As long as one retains his diploma and his trade plate one is presumably "employed," whether he sees one client an hour each working hour of the day or only one a month—and then cannot collect his fees. The percentages of unemployment obtained for the professions in Buffalo and Syracuse obviously, therefore, cover only that small proportion of the professional workers who had finally given up the struggle, have given up their offices and had gone on without income from their trade long enough to consider prospects as hopeless.

In the next issue of the *Communist* we shall conclude the details of this study of the extent of unemployment in the United States at the beginning of the fourth winter of the economic crisis. At this time we present by way of summary a Table of the number of unemployed, now and in 1930 (the Federal census), for each of the industrial classes into which the working population of the country are classified. We use the classification by "industries" rather than by "occupations," first because in the "occupation" classification the 4,000,000 "clericals" are listed separately from the industries in which they are engaged, and no separate index of employment, and therefore, of unemployment of the clerical occupations is available; secondly, because the Federal unemployment census was taken on that basis, and we wish to present its figures alongside of our own. The Table is shown on the following pages.

As regards the status of the crisis *there is nothing on the horizon that would seem to promise any improvement, however slight, in the economic situation of the country in the discernable future.* Says *Business Week* of November 23, " . . . It is obvious that business has become less able to recover under its own motive power partly because of the unprecedentedly drastic and swift deflation of consumer income and partly because of the prolonged delay in deciding between a policy of active inflation and one of all-around write-

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NUMBER OF EMPLOYABLES AND UNEMPLOYED IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1930 AND IN 1932

Industrial Group	*Employables as of April, 1930*	*% Unemployed, Classes A & B*[1]	*Numbers Unemployed, 1930*	*Number Unemployed as of July, 1932*	*Percent Unemployed July, 1932*
1. AGRICULTURE	10,428,323	1.4	143,000		
Owners and tenants*	6,012,000			465,000	7.7
Unpaid family workers	1,732,972			130,000	7.7
Wage workers	2,732,972			1,138,000	38.0
2. FORESTRY AND FISHING	270,000	10.4	28,000		
Fishermen and oystermen	73,000				
Lumbermen, raftsmen, etc.	(162,000)			146,000	81.0[4]
Proprietors, etc.	(35,000)				
3. EXTRACTION OF MINERALS	1,158,000	16.3	189,000		
Coal mining	692,000	(20.2)	(140,000)	304,000	44.0
Metal mining	150,000			106,000	70.5
Quarrying	76,000			38,000	50.5
Oil and gas well	123,000			55,000	44.6
Proprietors and others	117,000				
4. MANUFACTURING AND MECH. INDUSTRIES	14,318,000	10.7	1,535,000		
In factory	9,800,000			4,410,000	45.0
"Not in factory"	283,000			127,000	45.0
Building	2,562,000	(19.0)	(487,000)	1,792,000	45.0
Unemployed	1,673,000[2]			1,673,000	100.0
5. TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION	4,439,000	6.4	283,000		
Steam railroads	2,160,000			1,100,000	51.0
Telephone and telegraph	375,000			78,750	21.0
Electric railroad and motor bus	1,375,000			335,500	24.4
Other	500,000			125,000	25.0

6. TRADE	757,000	3.9	295,000	1,884,000	25.0
7. PUBLIC SERVICE (excluding teachers)	1,058,000	2.8	30,000	175,000	16.5
8. PROFESSIONAL SERVICE	3,426,000	2.8	94,000		
Teachers	1,063,000			212,000	20.0
All others	2,363,000			189,000	8.0
9. DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL	4,812,000	5.1	245,000	1,584,000	33.0
10. INDUSTRY NOT SPECIFIED	1,333,000	25.9	345,000	666,500	50.0
	Unemployed in Classes C,D,E,F,G[1]		741,000		
TOTAL	48,833,000	8%	3,929,000	16,845,000[3]	34.5[6]

* Tenants accounted for 42.4% of this number.

1. Class A—Out of a job, able to work, and looking for a job (2,429,000)
   Class B—Having a job, but on lay offs without pay, excluding sick and voluntarily idle (758,585)
   Class C—Out of a job and unable to work
   Class D—Have jobs, idle account sickness or disability
   Class E—Out of a job but not looking for work.
   Class F—Have jobs, but idle voluntarily without pay
   Class G—Vacation, etc.
2. The excess over and above the average employed in 1926; slightly less than the figure in the text to bring it into alignment with the total of this column.
3. Exclusive of the 1,250,000 who have become available for employment since April, 1930.
4. That is, of the 180,000 in "Lumber and Products."
5. The physical volume base.
6. For New York City, as of this Fall, the Welfare Council estimates the extent of unemployment as 33% of all availables.

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down of debt burdens to cope with the collapse of price levels . . . "

"Business has become less able to recover under its own motive power"! This cry of despair from such a capitalist organ of business opinion as *Business Week* is, to say the least, ominous. Time was when such weeklies looked hopefully to the "Fall upturn," to Labor Day, to the election to mark the "turn for the better." But the "Fall upturn" has come and gone, Labor Day failed to spell the magic moment, and Election Day has brought in the pleas from our European debtor countries to mitigate their debts to us, and sterling has fallen to record lows.

Hogs, it will be recalled, were going to pull us out of the depression, and then cattle, and then wheat, and then cotton. Live stock prices and cotton are now where they were before the mid-summer rise (stimulated then by speculative elements and much false information, as recorded in our reviews in *The Communist* for August and September). Wheat and other grain crops have early in November fallen to "historic lows." A Washington dispatch in the New York *Times,* November 3, reads: "For the first time in the history of this country, wheat today (at below 42 cents a bushel) was worth less on the market than the amount of tariff designed to protect it from foreign competition." The American farmers' income for the current year is reported to have fallen to about $5,000,000,000 as against $12,000,000,000 in 1929. The farm debt, long term and short is three times this years' agricultural income—$15,000,000,000. "Foreclosures of farm mortgages, which were around 45,000 in 1929, are now reported to be running at the rate of at least 150,000 for the current year," declares the New York *Times* in an editorial November 22, and adds, "Doubtless the figure would be still larger if foreclosures were made wherever the mortgagor was in default."

The *Business Week* weekly business index is now, in mid-November, within .2 of the record low reached last mid-summer. Electric power production, a most inclusive measure of industrial activity of the country, reached a new record low during the week ended November 19. Sales of new life insurance in October were 18% below the same month of a year ago, while for the 10 months to date they were 15.7% below the corresponding period of a year ago. General Motor sales to *dealers,* that is, *in anticipation* of a market, amounted to the incredibly low figure of 5,810, as against over 21,000 a year ago and 23,000 in October, 1930.

To repeat and again underline the words of *Business Week*—*"Business has become less able to recover under its own motive power."* A third of the population of the country is about to go on a charity rations.

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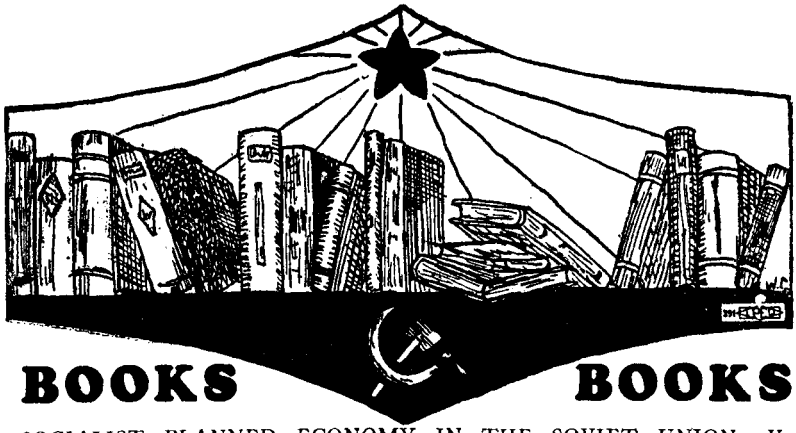

SOCIALIST PLANNED ECONOMY IN THE SOVIET UNION. V. OBOLENSKY-OSSINSKY and others of the Soviet delegation to the World Social Economic Congress at Amsterdam, Holland, August 23-29, 1931. New York: International Publishers, 1932. 126 pp. 90c.

Reviewed by JOHN IRVING

AMID a bewildering multitude of futilities, old and new, toward which American capitalist "leaders" are turning for a way out of the greatest crisis in the history of the country, "planning" is beginning to assume a very prominent place. "Planning" had, apparently, been the magic wand by which a bunch of be-whiskered doctrinnaires—Bolsheviks—pulled their country out of an economic chaos into which it had been plunged by seven years of war, revolution, fraternal carnage and famine! It might be made to turn the trick for us also!

After all, there is nothing really new in this idea of "planning," say the American bourgeois economists. It is not even original with the Russians. According to the dean of American political scientists, Charles A. Beard, "hints of it were discovered by Charles Barbage a century ago." "Indeed," this great American authority assures us, lest we hesitate to import a Communist idea to this country of rugged individualism, "planning of economy was anathema to the Bolsheviks until, facing the task of feeding enraged multitudes, they laid aside Marx, took up Frederick Winslow Taylor, and borrowed foreign technology to save their political skins . . . " Furthermore, Professor Beard assures us, "There is nothing in the concept that is alien to American experience. Our giant industrial corporations, though harassed by politics, bear witness to the efficacy of large-scale planning . . . " (In the *Forum,* July, 1931, "A Five Year Plan for America").

In the face of the fact that Professor Beard's abysmal ignorance of the very elements of economic planning, as disclosed in this quotation, is all too typical of its conception by the American press, American publicists and American college professors (we could, but we need not, enumerate them), it is fortunate indeed that this report on economic planning by the Soviet delegation has been made available to the American reader at this time.

Economic planning under capitalism, the Soviet delegation tells us at the very outset of the report, is a contradiction in terms. The anarchy of capitalist production is the very antithesis of social economic planning,—the antithesis which arises from the "contradiction between socialized organization

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in the individual factory and social anarchy in production as a whole," as Frederick Engels put it some 40 years ago. (*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, Charles Kerr edition, p. 137). And as Ossinsky, of the delegation, puts it:

As long as "the environment which fosters bourgeois interests, habits and ideology remains . . . unchanged and the masses of the workers have no social incentive to support planned economy because they do not regard it as their own common cause," an attempt to superimpose a scheme of social economic planning would only lead to "friction and conflicts between the class groups represented on the planning bodies; indecision and inertness on the part of business leaders; their insubordination to planning decisions; mass abuses, peculation and graft; and to the hampering and disruption of the economic process which will be tantamount to the worst of crises." "Indeed," Ossinsky adds, "it is altogether impracticable to imagine that the employers who wield real power and force will allow themselves to be brushed aside" by the dictates of a planning board.

The very planning of "our giant industrial corporations," to repeat Dr. Beard's phrase, which under capitalism is and must be of an internal and individual nature only, precludes social planning. Their planning has as its aim, through internal rationalization and external sparring, the strengthening of their strategic position in the competition with other corporations operating in the same field and with both those from whom they obtain their raw materials and to whom they sell their finished products. That is an intensifying of economic anarchy, not a rational integration of the economic life of the people. It is individual competitive maneuvering, not social planning.

The fact is, social economic planning is the very essence of Socialism. Under capitalism planning is possible only within given economic units, the "large-scale planning" of Professor Beard; inter-enterprise planning is impossible. "Under Socialism," Ossinsky points out, "the whole economy of the country becomes a huge single enterprise. Under this system, the planning of the whole national economy is not only possible, but *absolutely necessary*" (reviewer's italics.) "For the social economic plan of the proletarian state is simultaneously the plan of management and the plan of Socialist construction, of the gradual reconstruction of the entire national economy on Socialist principles."

Capitalist economic planning is of the same cloth with "organized capitalism," "managed capitalism," of our social-fascists—the Socialists, the progressives and the like. Capitalist economic planning is but a modern version of the old *pax Romana*—a Roman peace—where the lion and the lamb lie down peaceably together—with the lamb inside the lion. Social economic planning under capitalism becomes an officially admitted and a legally enforced dictatorship of capital, and can lead to nothing but fascism.

But as Comrade D. Z. Manuilsky has put it,* "Fascism, itself a product of the crisis of capitalism, increases the instability of the capitalist system, and paves the way for its own doom and the doom of the whole capitalist system."

Under capitalism, economic planning, in order to assure the flow of profits through the upkeep of prices, may involve the destruction of production

* In *The Communist Parties and the Crisis of Capitalism*, his speech delivered before the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I., held March-April, 1931. Workers Library Publishers, 25c.

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"surplus," as for instance the suggestion of a member of the United States Farm Board to plow under one-third of the cotton acreage, or the actual burning of billions of pounds of coffee in Brazil. It may even point to the demolition of a portion of the country's "surplus" productive capacity, as was recently advocated by the American publicist-economist, Stuart Chase.

Socialist economic planning, on the other hand, proceeds, through planned research, through the invention of new labor-saving processes, through *increased* productive capacity, to *increased* production in order to meet the ever-expanding material and cultural wants of the masses.

Under Socialism only, when *"the proletariat has become the collective master of production,"* can *"the active participation of the entire working class"* in the carrying out of the plan become possible. For under Socialism only is production keyed to the expanding and continuously rising standard of living of the masses; whereas, under capitalism it is keyed to the progressive accumulation of private profits from the surplus value created by the exploitation of labor. To quote Ossinsky again: "An essential characteristic feature of Socialist planned economy is the 'preponderance of demand over supply'."

"What then are the concrete premises for the Socialist planned economy that has just been described?" asks Ossinsky, and answers:

"The first is the complete socialization of all means of production and distribution."

The second is "that power passes into the hands of the working class . . . " Social economic planning must be a function of the state and "social economic" planning carried on by the capitalist state must, by the very structure and function of the latter, be of such nature as to secure the greatest benefits to the capitalist elements of society at the expense of the standard of living of the working masses. Social economic planning of this sort must defeat itself and breed new and intensified economic crises which give rise to the need for economic planning.

The third premise, which is a corollary of the first two, is the abolition of classes," and class exploitation and class parasitism.

Another essential premise is the increasing improvement in the standard of living of the working class both as a direct aim and as the very condition of successful social economic planning.

The next premise is the concentration of leadership—"The creation of a single centralized directing system of guidance (as) the corollary of the principle of concentration and specialization of industry."

"A premise of developed social economic planning is the gradual elimination of the contrast between town and country, 1. based on the greatest possible mechanization of (agricultural) production and on the . . . combination of industry with agriculture . . . Agriculture must become completely permeated with the principle of social economic planning."

"The abolition of colonial exploitation and the placing of the toilers of all nationalities and races on an equal level is the corollary of the two preceding premises and reinforces them . . . Artificial concentration of industries in the region where the ruling nation predominates is put to an end. The systematic development of the natural resources of all parts of the former empire is undertaken. Social economic planning is introduced throughout the entire territory."

"In conclusion, it is necessary to mention one general premise of social economic planning. The greatest encouragement and development is given to the work of scientific research, especially in the field of technology and the

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social sciences, but also, of course, in all the other various fields of science. The plan as the manifestation of social consciousness, as the form of society's rational control over its economy, cannot base its methodology of industrial-technical development on anything else but science—the quintessence of social thought and experience."

These are the objects and the premises of social economic planning, possible only under Socialism, but that can become only a catch-word, a delusion under capitalism.

Having established the *premises* and the *nature* of social economic planning, and having pointed out the *futility* of the proposals for social economic planning under capitalism, Ossinsky proceeds to discuss the *forms* of social economic planning as they have been developed in the Soviet Union. Space does not permit us to follow through this part of his report in detail. But one thing we must record, if for no other purpose than for the edification of American historians, is the fact that economic planning in the Soviet Union began with the moment of the wresting of power by the Bolsheviks from the hands of the chauvinist-opportunist Kerensky and the subjugation of the counter-revolution. The system of "War Communism" (1918-20), forced upon the proletarian state by the counter-revolution, already involved a form of planned economy, true, the "economy of a besieged fortress," as Ossinsky aptly puts it. But already in the last year of the civil war period, "on Lenin's initiative, a beginning was made with the working out of a general plan for the reconstruction of the national economy, a plan based on the electrification of the country . . . This 15-year plan . . . was passed in December, 1920 (!) by the Congress of Soviets, and becomes the starting point of the whole subsequent planning work." In February, 1921, the State Planning Commission—Gosplan—was established, and so, through several stages of development, to the first and now to the second Five-Year Plan.

The story of how the Soviet Union almost barehanded lifted the national economy out of its utter collapse, in which the Bolsheviks found it, to its pre-war level in the course of the five-year "restoration" period—1921-26, of how by one audacious effort after another it has by now in a matter of another five years reached levels of production and of output double and treble pre-war figures, and of how the slogan "overtake and surpass" the capitalist countries is almost within the realms of early realization, is told graphically by Delegate S. L. Ronin. We have space here to cite but a few of his figures:

For instance, the production of electric energy, in million kilowat hours, amounted to 1,945 in 1913, to 8,231 in 1930. The production of pig iron, which in 1913 amounted to 4,210 thousand tons, and which had fallen to less than 3% of the 1913 output in 1920, amounted to 5,017 in 1930; the production of agricultural machinery has risen from 67 million roubles in 1913 to 482.2 million roubles in 1930; of electrical equipment, from 0 in 1913 to 70.6 million roubles in 1926, and to 364.1 million roubles in 1930. And so on.

In the meanwhile planned organization in marketing and retailing has eliminated the wastes inherent in competitive marketing in capitalist countries so that while in America, for instance, marketing expenses average about 33 1/3 of the selling price, in the U.S.S.R. they amount to not more than 12%.

Finally, the slogan to "overtake and surpass" the foremost capitalist countries in the world is within easy vision. Already in 1931 the Soviet output of pig iron is larger than that of Great Britain and is equal to 83% of

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the German output, both as of 1930. In 1931 the Soviet Union surpassed France "in the consumption of iron and steel, in the production of coal, in the output of electrical energy and in machine construction. The U.S.S.R. is already more electrified than Great Britain," etc.

A. Gayster, telling the story of the *Planning and the Development of Agriculture in the U.S.S.R.*, shows how the inefficiency of the small farm has been superseded by the more efficient large scale mechanized collectives, planned on a national scale and on the basis of a rational geographical distribution and specialization of crops. Along with this have come the greater educational and cultural opportunities for the farming population and an improvement in its material well-being. As an instance of the general improvement in the life of the rural population of the Soviet Union, one may cite the reduction of the death rate in the population at large and in the infant death rate especially. Thus, the number of deaths per thousand in the rural population in 1911-13 was 28.6, in 1928 it was 18.7. In 1911-13 266 infants up to the age of one year died out of every one thousand born. In 1928 that number had decreased to 156.

Finally, I. A. Kraval portrays the place of *Labor in the Planned Economy of the U.S.S.R.*

"Our Soviet economic system is developing at a tempo utterly beyond the reach of the capitalist system," says Kraval. The decisive factor conditioning this tempo, he explains, "is the powerful development of Socialist forms for labor organization, on the basis of the fact that the working masses are conscious that they work only for themselves and that they are not only producers but also organizers of production," and, quoting Stalin, this has brought about "a radical change in man's attitude toward labor, since it is transforming labor from the shameful and heavy burden it was once considered to be into a matter of honor, a matter of heroism, of glory and valor."

Already labor in the Soviet Union has the shortest working day in the world. Provisions for social insurance are the most comprehensive of all industrial countries, housing accomodation for the worker has been made a matter of national concern, the program for health and sanitation, education, art and culture are part and parcel of the social economic plan. Equal pay for equal labor of men and women is the universal rule. Child labor does not exist.

But, of course, the U.S.S.R. is a workers' country.

This, in brief, is social economic planning understood and applied in the only Socialist country in the world, where alone social economic planning is possible. Let our bourgeois historians read this report that in the future they may not again indulge in glib platitudes. And, above all, let the workers read it so that they may realize fully what is possible in a land of Socialism.

COUP D'ETAT, Curzio Malaparte. E. P. Dutton & Co. 251 pp. $2.50.
Reviewed by Robert Julian Kenton

THIS is a book by an active Italian fascist on the technique of revolution. This technique, so the author claims, is independent of time and place. It is unnecessary to consider the political, social and economic conditions of the day. Only a small body of picked men—a thousand in all—are required. Not only are the masses not needed, they are a hindrance, given such a picked body and the morrow will dawn on a successful revolution. Thus Malaparte—and Trotsky! Yes, Trotsky, for our fascist is too modest to take the credit for himself. It was Trotsky, he says, who brought about the October Revolution. Lenin was only a theologian raised on the gospel of Marx.

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What is this technique that Marx and Lenin overlooked, according to Malaparte, but which Trotsky comprehended. It consists simply in seizing the railroad stations, waterworks, telephone and other vital industrial services in a city. Nothing more, nothing less. Seize the government? Wait for favorable circumstances? Unnecessary. The author quotes Trotsky as saying: "An insurrection does not require favorable circumstances." (page 46).

Alas, the technique is too simple. What Malaparte quotes Lenin as telling Trotsky the night before that historic October day is still valid. The Bolsheviks had already occupied these vital services. But the army had not been touched, neither had the Kerensky Government been molested. Trotsky believed that the revolution was over—that it was already a success. Lenin looked as him, smiled, and said that it had just begun, that unless they crushed the enemy army and dispersed its government they themselves would suffer that fate. (p. 54). The next day therefore saw the destruction of the last bulwarks of the capitalist regime. Malaparte talks as if coups d'etat are created out of nothing. He ignores completely any discussion of class forces—to him they have no existence. A revolution occurs because a thousand men will it! This is of course absurd. Coups d'etat have a chance for success only when they are the product of substantial class forces.

Coups d'etat are fundamentally different from revolutions. They are products of dissimilar class bases. A coup d'etat is a reflection of an internal struggle between rival claimants within a class! The rivals are fairly certain that the successful claimant will retain the allegiance of the ruling class. In such a case the masses need not be relied upon except for a show of force. It is known that a life and death struggle will not result. Existing property rights remain inviolate; there is no need for resistance. A revolution is a different matter—a life and death matter. The old ruling class cannot afford to remain quiescent; it has everything to lose. A show of force is insufficient, it is necessary to completely crush them. A coup d'etat retains the machinery of state; it merely changes the officials. It is their own exploitation machine, why should they destroy it. But a new ruling class of course cannot utilize the old governmental machine; it was not created for this purpose. It must be destroyed and replaced by a new state machine. That is why Lenin advocated the destruction of the bourgeois state and the creation of a proletarian state.

This book of Malaparte's was reviewed by the Socialist, Joseph Shaplin, in the New York *Times*. He has two important "contributions" to make. One is that the Bolsheviks were successful in 1917 only because they were aided by the Monarchists who believed they would be easier to overthrow! The other is that dictatorships are incapable of solving their economic problems.

Shaplen of course does not and cannot offer any proof of this clumsy lie. The Bolsheviks were the only people they feared—to prevent the Reds from gaining any influence was their chief aim. At every point the two groups fought fiercely.

Concerning the second charge Shaplen seems to have been asleep deliberately for the past decade. Soviet Russia is today the only country in the world that is advancing, growing, industrializing—the only country where the workers' conditions are being constantly bettered. The very successes of Socialism is the reason for the violent denials by the Socialist Party of the ability of the proletarian dictatorship to solve the economic problems.

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INDEX - VOLUME XI, 1932

Page

ADORATSKY, V
On the Theoretical Foundations of Marxism-Leninism *Part* 1 53
Part 2 141
Part 3 252
Part 4 357
Part 5 466

ALLEN, A.
Unemployed Work—Our Weak Point 681

ALLEN, JAMES
Book Review: "International Pamphlets" 767

AMIS, B. D.
For a Strict Leninist Analysis of the Negro Question 944

BITTELMAN, ALEX
To the Study of Lenin and Our Party 3
The Growth of the Party in the Struggle Against Centrism and Sectarianism 433

BROWDER, EARL
For National Liberation of the Negroes! War Against White Chauvinism 295
Japan, America, and the Soviet Union 392
Place the Party on a War Footing 590

S. CARPIO
Situation in the Philippines and Tasks of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands 1119

CARR, SAM
A Year of Sharp Class Struggles in Canada 131

CHILDS, M. H.
The International Significance of Bolshevism 99
The American Social Fascists 708

COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
The Increased Danger of War Against the U.S.S.R. and the Tasks of the Communist (*Resolution of Eleventh Plenum of E.C.C.I.*) 89
The Communist Party and Parliamentarism (*Thesis adopted by the Second Congress of the C.I.*) 184
The Tasks of the Communist Sections Regarding Municipal Policy (*Resolution of the Enlarged Presidium of the E.C.C.I*) 281
Lessons of the Strike Struggles in the U.S.A. (*Resolution of the E.C.C.I.*) 402
The Work of Trade Union Fractions (*Resolution of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I.*) 745
Capitalist Stabilization Has Ended (*Thesis of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. on the report of Comrade Kuusinen*) 975

COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION
The Directives on the Second Five-Year Plan of the Soviet Union (*Resolution of the Seventeenth Party Conference*) 206

COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U. S. A.
The Tasks of the Communist Party U. S. A. (*Resolution for the Fourteenth Plenum of the Central Committee*) 310
Lessons of the Bonus March (*Statement of the Central Committee*) 792

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Sharpening Capitalist Offensive, the Rising Tide of Mass Struggles, and the Next Tasks of the Party (*Resolution of the Fifteenth Plenum of the Central Committee*). 902
CRUDEN, ROBERT L. (*with Robert W. Dunn*)
How the Crisis Hit the Auto Workers 230
DON, SAM
Some Problems of Agit-Prop Work and Our Election Campaign 723
DUNN, ROBERT W. (*with Robert L. Cruden*)
How the Crisis Hit the Auto Workers 230
Will Imperialist War Bring Back Prosperity? 631
DUNNE, BILL
The Struggle Against Unemployment and the Communist Way Out of the Crisis 17
The War Offensive—Tightening the Capitalist Dictatorship in the United States 543
The Capitalist Offensive and the Revolutionary Way Out of the Crisis 1015
DUTT, R. PALME
The Ottawa Empire Conference 817
EDITORIALS
Japanese Imperialism in All Its Insolent Nakedness 195
The World Is Drifting into an Imperialist World War 291
May Day, 1932. 387
The Imperialist Offensive and the Fourteenth Plenum of the Central Committee 483
Concretize and Strengthen the Anti-War Struggle 579
The Election Struggle Is the Fight for Bread 675
The Fight Against the Capitalist Offensive and the Unity of the Employed and the Unemployed 771
Bolshevik Fire Against Opportunism! 867
Fifteen Years of Victorious Proletarian Revolution 963
The United Front Policy and the Struggle Against Sectarianism....1059
FORD, JAMES W.
The Bankruptcy of Capitalism and Capitalist Education 831
FOSTER, WILLIAM Z.
Some Elementary Phases of the Work in the Reformist Trade Unions 509
GANNES, HARRY
The Role of American Finance Capital in the Present Crisis 325
GEBERT, B. K.
How the St. Louis Unemployed Victory Was Won 786
GEORGE, HARRISON
Causes and Meaning of the Farmers' Strike and Our Tasks as Communists 918
HAN, D. L.
Imperialism Dictates the Main Policy of the Koumintang 1023
HAYWOOD, HARRY
The Scottsboro Decision 1065
HATHAWAY, C. A.
For a Complete Mobilization of the Party for Real Mass Work in the Election Campaign 418
The Increasing Radicalization of the Masses and the Election Issues 874
IRVING, JOHN
The Economic Crisis Grinds On 663

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is Prosperity Around the Corner? 856
The Fourth Winter of Unemployment Is Upon Us 957
How many Unemployed? *Part* 1 1048
Part 2 1135
Book Review:—Planned Economy Under Socialism—Chaos Under Capitalism 1143

JAMES, M.
Yankee Imperialist Intervention Against the Chinese Revolution 620

JOHNSON, TOM
The Fight Against Sectarianism in the National Miners Union 697

KAGANOVITCH, I. M.
For A Bolshevik Study of the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union 159

KENTON, ROBERT JULIAN
Book Review: Coup d'Etat vs. Revolution 1147

KNORIN, W.
Fascism, Social Democracy and Communism 519
The Significance of the Results of the German Elections 811

KUMAMOTO
The Revolutionary Example of the Japanese Toilers 625

KUUSINEN, O.
The Struggle for the Majority of the Working Class and Our Mass Work 496

LABOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
Armaments and Profits 265
The End of the Third Year of Crisis Reveals Further Deepening 454
The American Economic Crisis 754

LENIN, V. I.
The Irish Rebellion of 1916 78
"Disarmament" 272
Instructions to the Soviet Delegation ot the Hague Conference 414
On Literature 575
"The Defense of the Fatherland" 657
Should Communists Participate in Bourgeois Parliaments? 688
Lessons of the Revolution 843
Two Letters Written on the Eve of October 1010

MARKOFF, A.
The Training of New Cadres and Our School System 731

MOSCOW COMMUNIST ACADEMY
Capitalist Production Sunk to 19th Century Level 762

MARTIN, A. G.
Latin America and Our Press 378

NAKATA
Growing Revolt in Japan 124

OLGIN, MOISSAYE J.
The Second Five-Year Plan 553
The Great Divide 989

OSSINSKY, N.
The Fourth Year of the Five-Year Plan 201

PURO, H.
The American Farmers Are Beginning to Fight 805

RODRIGUEZ, O.
The Uprising in Salvador 248

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Growth of the Revolutionary Upsurge in the Carribean 716
S., T. S.
Rapid Upsurge of the Revolutionary People's War in Manchuria 705
SIMONS, WILLIAM
The Philippine Islands in the War Area 640
The Expanding Inter-Imperialist Wars in Latin America 1076
SMITH, C.
The Problem of Cadres in Our Party 110
The Growing Political Significance of Organizational Work in the Present Situation 239
SMITH, VERN
Book Review: "The Molly Maguires" 670
STACHEL, JACK
Lessons of Two Recent Strikes 527
The Warren Steel Strike 889
STALIN, J.
Some Questions Relating to the History of Bolshevism 66
Marxism and the National Problem *Part* 1 350
Part 2 460
Part 3 569
On the International Character of the October Revolution 950
STEUBEN, JOHN
Leadership at the Bench 46
Shop Politics and Organization 338
TERENTYEV, N.
Contradictions Among the Imperialism and Conflicts on the Pacific Coast 606
TRACHTENBERG, ALEXANDER
Lenin's Writings Between the Two Revolutions of 1917 1000
VASILKOVSKY, G.
Oswald Spengler's "Philosophy of Life" 371
WEINSTONE, WILLIAM W.
The United Front Tactics in the Lawrence Strike 9
WEISS, MAX
American Imperialism's Growing Parasitic Bureaucracy 740
WILLIAMSON, JOHN
The United Front—A Tactic of Struggle, Not Peace (including "The United Front in Chicago" by A. Verblin) 1086
WILLNER, S.
Some Lessons of the Last Miners' Strike 27
Organizational Problems in Our Unemployment Work 215
The Lessons of the Illinois Miners' Strike 1029
WITTFOGEL, K. A.
Hundredth Anniversary of the Death of Hegel 84
YAROSLAVSKY, EM.
Statement made in connection with Comrade Stalin's letter on the Slutsky article 179
UNSIGNED ARTICLES
The Canadian Party and the Struggle Against Illegality 443
Marxist Study Courses 479
The Struggle Against the Provocateur 647
Tactics of the United Front 932

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